00023492

THE
ASIATIC SOCIETY OF BOMBAY
TOWN HALL, BOMBAY–400 023.

Digitized with financial assistance from the
Government of Maharashtra
on 18 July, 2018

THE LIVES

OF THE MOST

EMINENT BRITISH PAINTERS

BY ALLAN CUNNINGHAM.

REVISED EDITION.

23492

ANNOTATED AND CONTINUED TO THE PRESENT TIME

BY MRS. CHARLES HEATON.

VOL. I.

LONDON: GEORGE BELL AND SONS, YORK STREET,

COVENT GARDEN.

1879.

00023492

EDITOR'S PREFACE.

WHEN first I undertook the preparation of a new edition of Allan Cunningham's well-known work, I feared that my task would be more difficult than it has proved. In some departments of art-history, modern research and criticism have brought to light so many new facts and effected such a complete change of opinion that many books of much more recent date have become almost useless as works of reference. As regards British art this has not been the case. Little of any great importance has been discovered since Cunningham wrote; and our shrewd Scottish Vasari having been more careful in retailing mere gossip and hearsay than his renowned Aretine predecessor, his pleasant biographies still retain almost all their old value. Indeed, though much criticism has been brought to bear of late years on several of the painters whose lives he has recorded, it is curious to find how little our real knowledge has been widened. Take for instance the life of Blake. In spite of the Blake *culte* that has arisen in the present day, and the torrent of eloquent writing that it has called forth, it is doubtful whether there can be found anywhere a more lifelike and vigorous sketch of this extraordinary man than that given by Cunningham, nor one on the whole more accurate. Of course much new knowledge has been gained of late years concerning Blake's works; but this, with such criticism as seemed of most interest, I have been able to add in foot-notes.

So it has been with the other biographies. My task —one of correction, and addition of new matter—has all been accomplished in notes. I have in no instance interfered with the original text except in the correction of mere verbal errors. For many of these notes I have been indebted to a mass of material (courteously placed at my

disposal by Mr. John Fowler, of Sharrowhead), collected by Allan Cunningham himself, and by his son Colonel Cunningham, with a view to a new edition. Some few of the corrections therefore are due to the author, but the greater part of the information of the foot-notes has been gained since his time. Those not marked "Ed." appeared in the former editions.

Besides this work of editing, it was deemed desirable, for the further utility of a standard work, that it should be continued down to the present day. I have therefore prepared short biographies of some of the most eminent British artists who have died since Cunningham's time. Want of space has compelled the omission of many names that otherwise might well claim a place, especially those of our great water-colour painters, who have, without doubt, risen to high eminence. Possibly their lives may be added at some future time, but for the present I have been obliged to confine my work exclusively to painters in oil, selecting among these such as are best known to fame, or who seemed most noteworthy. Continuations are generally dull affairs, and I cannot pretend that my "Lives" are written in the same lively vein as Cunningham's: still I hope they will not be found without value and interest. And as our interest in any work is always greater if we know something of the author, I have also added a short account of Allan Cunningham himself—the sturdy Scotch stonemason, who by his own unaided exertions achieved both independence and fame, and who has written one of the best works of biography in the English language.

MARY M. HEATON.

Lessness Heath, Kent.

LIFE OF ALLAN CUNNINGHAM.

ALLAN CUNNINGHAM, like most Scotchmen, claimed descent from an ancient family. The Cunninghams of Cunningham had been bold barons in their day, had drawn the claymore for their king, and had held large possessions in Ayrshire. Allan's more immediate progenitors, however, were simply small tenant farmers in the neighbourhood of Edinburgh; and his father, John Cunningham, having been obliged to give up farming on his own account, filled the office of land-steward or factor to several gentlemen. John Cunningham was a man of superior intellect to that usually found in the position he occupied; he had, it is said, some knowledge of scientific agriculture, and he was "fond of collecting all that was characteristic of his country," a taste transmitted to several of his sons. The mother also was a woman of good education and considerable ability, having a poetic fancy and great taste for literature.

To this worthy and somewhat uncommon pair were born nine children—five sons and four daughters—all of whom seem to have been remarkable for more than ordinary capabilities, several of them besides Allan evincing a talent for poetry, and possessing literary power. Allan, the fourth son, was born at Blackwood, in Dumfriesshire, in a cottage on the banks of the Nith, on the 7th of December, 1784. Soon after his birth, however, his parents removed to Dalswinton, with which village, as we see in his verses, all his earliest memories were associated. Here he gained what knowledge he could at a dame-school, learning, at all events, to spell through the Bible, and was then, at eleven years of age, placed with his elder brother James to learn the trade of stonemason.

From henceforth, one would imagine, there could not

have been much opportunity for literary culture, but "where there's a will there's a way," and the boy stonemason was as wilful as could be desired in the pursuit of knowledge. "In the evenings," says his recent biographer, the Rev. David Hogg, "after the labours of the day were over, as well as at the midday hour, he read with avidity every book within his reach, listened eagerly to every snatch of old ballad he heard sung, treasured up every story told, his own imagination amply supplying any omission in the narrative or any failure in the memory of the narrator." Moreover, he taught himself English grammar, and managed by constant practice to acquire facility in composition.

Yet we must by no means think of young Allan as a pale student condemned during the day to an uncongenial occupation, and only happy when burning midnight oil. On the contrary, his labours as a stonemason do not seem to have been at all distasteful to him, and when freed from them he appears to have been foremost in every piece of merry mischief going on in the neighbourhood. Numerous stories are told of his youthful pranks, in most of which he was assisted by a young fellow named M'Ghie, the son of a weaver, and Allan's chief friend at this time. On one occasion, Mr. Hogg relates, when the inhabitants of their village were suffering like the rest of England from a nightmare fear of a French invasion, they awoke one morning and found every house in the place mysteriously marked with a number. Great was the alarm, for the village was not far from the coast, and it was feared that the enemy had secretly landed and were making observations. Every one was kept on the alert, and it was not for some time that it was discovered that a heartless hoax had been played on the worthy folk of Kirkmahoe. After this a placard was secretly posted in several places, offering a reward of £50 for the conviction of the offenders "who had been guilty of wantonly, maliciously, and profanely imitating David's numbering of the people, and the marking of the dwellings of the Israelites," but it was never found out until Mr. M'Ghie revealed the secret, a short time before his death, which happened in 1868, that he

and Allan were not only the perpetrators of the joke, but also the authors of the subsequent placard.

A wider mystification was soon to be carried into effect by the incorrigible Allan. He was now, although still working diligently as a stonemason, and even acquiring a considerable reputation for his skill in the trade, trying the strength of his muse in various verses that he contributed from time to time to a London magazine called "Literary Recreations," under the signature of "Hidallan," the name of one of Ossian's heroes. The editor of this magazine, an Irishman named Eugenius Roche, was evidently proud of having a young, self-taught poet to introduce to his public, and gave him every encouragement, so that hopes of literary fame began to dawn upon him, and all the time that could be spared from building whinstone was given to composing national songs. "My dear James," he writes to his eldest brother about this time, "I have been holding high converse in the path of song since I saw you. I have composed eleven 'split new ones,' one of which I have enclosed. Want of time prevents my sending more which I deem of superior worth. I have no place to compose my mind in but in the Babelonian slang of tongues which compose a workman's kitchen. I am, however, much at my ease and comparatively serious." *Comparatively*, it will be observed. Though now twenty-five and a highly esteemed workman, to whom was always confided the most artistic portion of the building in hand, and who had even been offered a partnership by his master, the spirit of fun was still strong within him.

This was suddenly called forth in an unexpected direction in 1809, when Mr. Cromek, a London engraver, whose dealings with Stothard and Blake I shall hereafter have occasion to notice, came to Dumfriesshire with the former artist, who was then collecting materials for his illustrations to Burns, and got introduced to Allan Cunningham. Cromek was fond of dabbling in antiquarian pursuits, and was delighted to find his young friend Allan well versed in all the old ballad literature of his country. "In one of their conversations on modern Scottish song," writes Mr. Peter Cunningham in the introduction to his edition of his

father's Poems and Songs, "Cromek made the discovery that the Dumfries mason on eighteen shillings a-week was himself a poet. Mrs. Fletcher may have told him as much: this, however, is immaterial. Cromek, in consequence of this discovery, asked to see some of his 'effusions.' They were shown to him, and at their next meeting he observed, as I have heard my father tell with great good humour, imitating Cromek's manner the while, 'Why, sir, your verses are well—very well; but no one should try to write songs after Robert Burns, unless he could write like him or some of the old minstrels.'

"The disappointed poet nodded assent, changed the conversation, and talked about the old songs and fragments of songs to be picked up among the peasantry of Nithsdale.

"'Gad, sir!' said Cromek, 'if we could but make a volume—Gad, sir! see what Percy has done, and Ritson, and Mr. Scott more recently with his Border Minstrelsy.'"

The idea instantly flashed across young Allan's mind of providing what Cromek thus ardently desired, by passing upon him a volume of imitations of his own, as genuine remains collected from the old inhabitants of Nithsdale and Galloway. The fun of the thing was probably at first its chief recommendation. It was irresistible, and without thinking anything more about it, Allan Cunningham committed himself to the undertaking.

Cromek was easily gulled, or more likely pretended to be, and when Allan sent him a few fragments as specimens, cried eagerly for more. Under these circumstances the supply, of course, was not likely to fail, and many charming ballads and songs, such as the "Bonnie Lady Anne," "She's gone to dwell in Heaven," "It's Hame and it's Hame," "Thou hast sworn by thy God," and others, were promptly despatched to London.[1] These, though written, it is true,

[1] Cromek, before leaving Scotland, had given Allan Cunningham a MS. book to copy the songs he *collected* into, bearing this inscription on the cover:—

"When this book is *filled* with old unpublished songs and ballads, and with remarks on them, historical and critical, by *Allan Cunningham*, it must be sent to R. H. Cromek 64, Newman Street, London.

in the old style of verse, were not of a nature to deceive acute criticism and it is not improbable that they did not, even at the first, impose upon Cromek, who was a tolerably good judge in such matters, as is proved by some of his remarks upon them. He kept a discreet silence, however, and professed a firm belief in the various old women and others whom Cunningham made out he consulted. Only in one of his letters he especially cautions Allan "not to divulge the *secrets of the prison-house*," and to let "*no mortal eyes keek in*"—language scarcely consistent with the collection simply of a few national songs. However this may be, Cromek assumed the whole merit and management of the proposed volume, which was finally published in 1810, under the title of "Nithsdale and Galloway Song," Cromek being the reputed collector and editor, though in reality Cunningham wrote the whole—the interesting introduction and descriptive notes, as well as the ballads themselves.

Meanwhile, on Cromek's recommendation and persuasion, Allan had taken the bold step of renouncing his trade of stonemason, leaving kith and kin and the girl he loved, and coming up to town to try his fortune. Cromek, it would seem, had somewhat misled Allan with regard to his prospects in London. Cromek himself at this time was in constant difficulties, and was not in a position to assist

"The writer of this knows enough of the last-mentioned gentleman to warrant him in *assuring* Mr. Cunningham that his exertions will not only be gratefully acknowledged, but when an opportunity occurs, kindly returned.

"Dumfries, Sept. 18th, 1809."

Such were the terms of the contract entered into between author and publisher. Perhaps if Allan Cunningham had known a little more about business matters at this time he would have been more cautious in accepting them. It does not appear that he ever received a penny from Cromek for all his work in the matter, and when the book was published he had even to buy copies to give to his friends. When Cromek presented him with a copy for himself he accompanied it with the remark, "It has been a costly work, and I have made nothing by it; but it is d——d good, let the critics say what they will; and when it goes to a second edition I will give you something handsome." This is related by Peter Cunningham from his father's own account. Cromek died before the second edition came out, so had not an opportunity of redeeming his promise.

materially an ambitious young author, however much he might wish to do so; but it was doubtless a disappointment to Allan after waiting some time to find nothing better offer itself than employment with a sculptor of little note named Bubb, by whom he was engaged at twenty-five shillings a week, a sum afterwards increased by four shillings, as he tells his brother in one of his home letters. "I am unco well myself," he writes; "God be blessed for it and praised too. I have four shillings a week added to my wages. We had designed a general strike, and many are yet out of employment. One of our men was turned off, and I am now considered the soul and nerve of the shop, and the master has taken a great regard for me, so I live very well and happily. I have left my old lodgings, and a young man called Thomas Lowrie, a cabinet-maker from Dumfries, has joined me in taking a neat room, where I will be cheaper and more heartsome. Indeed, London is in no way suitable to any but a married person. I breakfast in one house, dine in another, sup in a third, and go to bed in a fourth. In every one of these places Extortion must have in her accursed hand. The thing is, everybody must live, and we buy one another like other vermin. So it would be no wonder were I found married in some letter or another soon." A pretty conclusion this for the prudent Allan to come to, that to save himself from extortion, and to reduce expenses, he had better get married!

This subtilty of reasoning would not probably have occurred to him, had he not already, as before hinted, lost his heart before he left Scotland, to a bonnie Dumfries lassie, whom he has celebrated as the Lovely Lass of Preston Mill.

> "There's comely maids on Dee's wild banks,
> And Nith's romantic vale is fu',
> By lonely Cluden's hermit stream
> Dwells monie a gentle dame, I trow!
> O, they are lights of a gladsome kind,
> As ever shone on vale or hill;
> But there's a light puts them a' out,
> The lovely lass of Preston Mill."

This "lovely lass," Jean Walker by name, now came to shine upon him in London. They were married on the 1st

of July, 1811, and we may hope he found her skill as a housekeeper successful in defeating London extortion.

Fortunately, in addition to his work with the chisel, Allan Cunningham was now beginning to find constant employment for his pen. On coming to London he had called on several editors, and among others upon Eugenius Roche, who had published his first effusions in the "Literary Recreations." This gentleman was now editing a paper called "The Day," and he kindly gave Allan an appointment upon it as reporter, which he held for some years, until his health obliged him to give it up. By this means, and with the aid of an occasional guinea or two for a "split new song," contributed to one of the magazines, he managed to push along and continued, as he says, "to keep his head above water, and on occasion take the middle of the causeway with an independent step," even though children now came to add to the economies of his household.

But after a few years of this uncertain kind of work a new career opened out for him. On his first coming to London Cromek had introduced him to Chantrey, then only a rising young sculptor. The introduction at the time had no result, but now that Chantrey was beginning to be known to fame he bethought him of Cunningham as being likely to assist him in his work, and accordingly engaged him as superintendent of his workshop at a small salary at first, but this grew as time went on and business became more plentiful and profitable. The connection thus formed between these two young men, both of whom had begun life amidst the same humble surroundings and had struggled through difficulties to independence was of the greatest advantage to both. It was indeed based on the warmest regard, Chantrey always regarding Cunningham as his dearest friend, and Cunningham having a deep affection and profound admiration for Chantrey. Besides the assistance he rendered to him in carrying out his works in sculpture, he acted also as Chantrey's secretary and amanuensis, and was left in sole charge when Chantrey, as often happened, went away for months at a time on foreign travel.

It has been said that Chantrey was sometimes indebted to his poetic assistant for suggestions for his designs, but no one has pointed out with certainty any work in sculpture actually designed by Allan Cunningham. He had not indeed any creative power in art, though he was faithful in executing designs from the clay model.

But while thus engaged in the sculptor's studio by day, he still wielded the pen at night, contributing numerous articles to the "London Magazine," "Blackwood," and other magazines.

In 1817, he writes thus to one of his old friends in Scotland: "I wish I could tell you good tidings of myself, but I have nothing better to tell you than that I am toiling ardently for 'saps o' cream' to three boy bairns, and coats of callimanco to my wife. I preserve a decent silence in verse and prose, and I believe some of my best friends think I have *steeked my gab for ever*. Believe not one word of it. I will come out among them all some morning like a trumpet sounding in a lonely glen."

He was indeed now preparing for a higher flight in the realms of poetry than any he had yet attempted—no less than the writing of a tragedy which he hoped to see brought out on the stage. As may be surmised, however, his strength was not equal to this most difficult of tasks, though it is one upon which so many young poets have tried their "'prentice hand." "Sir Marmaduke Maxwell" was published in March, 1822, together with a few songs and the fine ballad of the "Mermaid of Galloway," which had before appeared in Cromek's volume. This little volume had been most favourably received by the critics, most of whom were loud in praise of the "touching poetry of Scotland." Some few, however, suspected a cheat. Bishop Percy avowed that the poems were "too good to be old," and Hogg, who had made the acquaintance of Allan and his brother James on the Scottish hills, boldly declared that his friend "Allan Cunningham was the author of all that was beautiful in the work." Sir Walter Scott was of the same opinion, but Professor Wilson was the first person who, as Hogg put it, "laid the saddle on the right horse." In a review in "Blackwood's Magazine" for December, 1819, he

distinctly stated it as his belief that both the appendix and the poems themselves belonged to Allan Cunningham. "Can the most credulous person," he says, "believe that Mr. Cromek, an Englishman, an utter stranger in Scotland, should have been able, in a few days' walk through Nithsdale and Galloway, to collect, not a few broken fragments of poetry only, but a number of finished and perfect poems of whose existence none of the inquisitive literary men or women of Scotland had ever before heard, and that too in the very country which Robert Burns had beaten to its every bush? but independently of all this, the poems speak for themselves and for Allan Cunningham."

This appreciative review, from so excellent an authority, fairly established Allan Cunningham's reputation. It did him good service with the publishers, and encouraged him to persevere in writing, which for some years past he had almost given up. It cannot be said, however, that "Sir Marmaduke Maxwell" was in any way a success. Before publishing it he sent the MS. to Sir Walter Scott, who, in the kindest manner, wrote him a long letter of advice and criticism, telling him of the faults of the piece, and that he did not think it fitted for the modern stage. This view was confirmed by the actor Terry, and Allan Cunningham, disheartened, never again attempted dramatic composition. "Sir Marmaduke Maxwell" is now remembered chiefly through Sir Walter Scott's kindly allusion to it in his introduction to "The Fortunes of Nigel." [1]

[1] "*Author.*—But there is my friend Allan has written just such a play as I might write myself in a very sunny day, and with one of Bramah's extra patent pens. I cannot make neat work without such appurtenances.

"*Captain.*—Do you mean Allan Ramsay?"

"*Author.*—No, nor Barbara Allan either. I mean Allan Cunningham, who has just published his tragedy of 'Sir Marmaduke Maxwell,' full of merry-making and murdering, kissing and cutting of throats, and passages which lead to nothing, and which are very pretty passages for all that. Not a glimpse of probability is there about the plot, but so much animation in particular passages, and such a vein of poetry through the whole, as I dearly wish I could infuse into my "Culinary Remains," should I ever be tempted to publish them. With a popular impress people would read and admire the beauties of Allan; as it is, they may, perhaps, only note his defects, or, what is worse, not note

Cunningham's admiration for Sir Walter Scott had once led him, when a mere lad, to walk all the way from Dalswinton to Edinburgh in order to catch sight of the great author. It must, therefore, have been extremely gratifying to him when Scott came to London in 1820 to make his acquaintance in Chantrey's studio. Scott, even at their first interview, soon put Cunningham at his ease, "having," as he says, "the power—I had almost called it the art—but art it was not—of winning one's heart and restoring one's confidence, beyond any man I ever met;" and the two lovers of Scottish song soon became friends. They met often afterwards at Chantrey's studio, and discussed old ballads and other kindred subjects with national enthusiasm.

Cunningham's next work was a collection, in two volumes, of the tales he had contributed from time to time to the "London Magazine." These were published under the title of "Traditional Tales of the English and Scottish Peasantry," and included many curious relics of fairy belief, some of them enshrined by him in verse. He also republished his "Cameronian Tales," that had appeared in "Blackwood;" but his principal work at this time was a collection of Scottish songs, in making which Sir Walter Scott gave him much valuable assistance. This work, which was gratefully dedicated to Sir Walter Scott, appeared in four volumes in 1826. Many of the songs in it are Allan Cunningham's own, and the introduction and notes, historical and critical, were all written by him, and are extremely interesting.

Next followed a work of a different kind—a piratical romance in broad Scotch, full of battle, murder, and sudden death, but in no other way remarkable. It was called "Paul Jones," and was pronounced, even by his friend the Ettrick Shepherd in one of his "Noctes," to be "a most decided failure." The public also were of much the same opinion about another romance, "Sir Michael Scott," pub-

him at all. But never mind them, honest Allan, you are a credit to Caledonia for all that. There are some lyrical effusions of his, too, which you would do well to read, Captain. 'It's Hame and it's Hame' is equal to Burns."

lished in 1827. "My chief object," writes Cunningham regarding this work, "was to write a kind of Gothic romance, a sort of British Arabian Nights, in which I could let loose my imagination among the mythological beings of fireside tales and old superstitions." But successful as he was in his national tales and character sketches, it would seem that he wanted the requisite power for constructing a continuous story filled with the necessary *dramatis personæ*. As Scott told him of his tragedy, there is in his novels "a fine tone of supernatural impulse," but the interest is not kept up, because the effort to preserve it is too distinctly visible. Two other romances, "Lord Roldan" and the "Maid of Elvar," followed "Michael Scott." Both are now forgotten.

The first mention I find of the "Lives of the British Painters" occurs in a letter to his friend Mr. Ritchie, of the "Scotsman," dated 20th October, 1828. He asks in this for some information concerning Jameson, and says, "I have some notion of writing the 'Lives of the British Painters' on the plan of Johnson's 'Lives of the Poets.' I am full of information on the subject, have notions of my own in keeping with the nature of the art, and I think a couple of volumes would not be unwelcome from one who has no theory to support, and who will write with full freedom and spirit." These two volumes, as we know, afterwards extended to six, the material increasing considerably as he went on. The first two were published in 1829, and called forth the following complimentary opinion from Prof. Wilson. "Allan Cunningham's 'Lives of the British Painters' —I know not which of the two volumes is the best—are full of a fine and an instructed enthusiasm. He speaks boldly but reverentially of genius, and of men of genius; strews his narrative with many flowers of poetry, disposes and arranges his materials skilfully, and is, in a few words, an admirable critic on art—an admirable biographer of artists."

Cunningham himself, sending the first volume, containing the lives of Hogarth, Wilson, Reynolds, and Gainsborough, to his friend Ritchie, before mentioned, says of his work: "This ought to be the most popular of anything I have yet

written, because I think it has more life and variety of narrative and anecdote than any of my works. I have read much, inquired much, and thought much, and formed my narratives from the best materials, and have endeavoured to impress them with a popular stamp." Their popularity was indeed immediate, and a second edition was required of the first two volumes long before the others were ready for publication. 12,000 copies were printed of the third volume, which appeared in 1830, the sale of the others having meanwhile risen to 14,000.

In 1831 he carried out a long-cherished desire to revisit Scotland, and passed a few days amid the well-remembered scenes of his early life; but his father was now dead, and the family scattered, so that there must have been as much of sadness as of pleasure in his recollections. Some of his Nithsdale friends, however, who were naturally proud of the poet their vale had produced, instituted a dinner in his honour, which is noteworthy as having called forth, it is said, the first public speech made by Thomas Carlyle. In less of Carlylese than his later utterances, our great latter-day Seer told the assembled company that he had come down from his retreat in the hills to meet Allan Cunningham at a time when scarcely any other circumstance would have induced him to move half-a-mile from home. He conceived that a tribute could not be paid to a more deserving individual, nor did he ever know of a dinner being given which proceeded from a purer principle. "When Allan left his native place," he continued, "he was poor, unknown, and unbefriended; nobody knew what was in him, and he himself had only a slight consciousness of his own powers. He now comes back: his worth is known and appreciated, and all Britain is proud to number him among her poets." This warm recognition of his countrymen must have been very grateful to hard-working Allan, for he was hard-working still—"toiling," as he says, "in marble and bronze all day, and at night dipping the pen in biographical ink to earn an honest penny for the bairns' bread." The "bairns" were now, however, fine strapping fellows of great promise. The two eldest, Joseph and Alexander, had got govern-

ment appointments in India; a third son, Francis, had also just gone out, and his youngest, Peter, was in the Audit Office, and was already beginning to be known in literature. Allan Cunningham's letters to his mother, published in his biography, are full of accounts of the doings of these clever sons, whose success in life was a great source of satisfaction in his declining years.

After the publication of the "Lives of the Painters," the next work of importance Cunningham undertook was an edition, in eight volumes, of the works of Burns, with a life of the poet. This was a task for which he was well fitted, and one, no doubt, in which he, as a brother poet, took great delight; still the work that it entailed must have been very great, though he speaks in poetical terms of having merely

> "Gather'd, Burns, thy scatter'd flowers
> Wi' filial hand."

His labours, however, are probably more correctly described in the following letter to Mr. Thomas Keightley, the author of the "Fairy Mythology," who had written to him on some question of Elfin lore:—

"27, Lower Belgrave Place,
"16 Dec. 1833.

"Dear Sir,—I have used you ill, and myself worse, for my silence looks as though I slighted you and was an ill-natured fellow. My life is that of a drudge: marble, bronze, clay, plaster, and drawings by day, and writing criticisms and idle lives, and other matters (all useful to one who has a wife and weans) during the evenings, drove elves and fairies out of my head. This was the less material since I have almost nothing to tell you. I am far from the land of Faery and cannot help myself to a lapful of anecdotes, all true and marvellous, from some fanciful old woman.

"The Lancashire goblin or elve after whom you inquire, was described to me at third hand: his name of Padfoote, or Padfoot, is rustical enough. His chief business was to scare the benighted traveller; and the way in which he

accomplished it, was by taking a stride below the ground for every stride the traveller took above it; as the mortal fled, the immortal followed, and when the former thought he outstripped the wind and halted to listen, he heard Padfoote, to his horror, panting and enjoying a hoarse and unearthly laugh immediately below him. In this he resembles Will-o'-wisp: when Will has decoyed his victim into a quagmire or impassable lake, he hangs his treacherous lanthorn above him for a moment, then douses the glim and vanishes with an unearthly laugh.

"You will find a fanciful account of a Faery funeral in my 'Life of Blake' in the 'Lives of the Painters.' If I had leisure I might give you some wizard light from the north on our Dumfriesshire elves, but I am over head and ears in Burns and his works. God bless and prosper your work.

"Yours ever,

"ALLAN CUNNINGHAM.

"Commend me to Taylor—a better man and a kinder never breathed." [1]

In 1841 the long service which Cunningham had rendered to his friend Chantrey was, to his infinite sorrow, brought to a close by the death of the sculptor. Allan had long been meditating giving up "toiling in marble and bronze," but it was sad to have his labours thus ended. He was asked to continue the work that Chantrey had undertaken, but this he refused, only pledging himself to finish such works as Chantrey had already modelled. Even this, it is doubtful whether he was able to fulfil, for these two faithful friends, who had each begun life under the same humble conditions, and who had worked together without intermission for twenty-eight years, were not long divided even in death. Chantrey left Cunningham an annuity of £100, to be continued to his widow; but he only received one payment of it before he followed Chantrey to the grave. His health, from over-work and

[1] I quote this letter in full, as revealing much of the kindly nature of the writer. It is in my own collection, and has never before been published.

other causes, had for some time been giving way, and on the 29th of October, 1842, a second attack of paralysis ended in his death, at the age of fifty-seven. He was buried at Kensal Green.

Allan Cunningham's last literary labour was the life of his friend and countryman, Sir David Wilkie, the proofs of which work occupied him only two days before his death. It was published in 1843, in three volumes. He also contemplated a series of "Lives of the Poets," and, indeed, he speaks in one of his letters of the first volume being "all but ready," but this work has not as yet been given to the world. In person Allan Cunningham is described, by a writer in the "Gentleman's Magazine," as having been "a tall, stout man, somewhat high-shouldered, broad-chested, and altogether strongly proportioned. He had a noble brow, and dark expressive eyes set beneath shaggy eyebrows. His accent was strongly Scotch, and he expressed himself, when warmed into a subject, with eloquence and feeling; but, generally speaking, his manner was quiet and reserved—not, however, timid and gauche, like that of Sir David Wilkie, but easy and self-possessed—quiet from a habit of observing, rather than from a dislike to conversation." Add to this, that in all his dealings he was straightforward, right-minded, and conscientious, true to himself and others, full of "the pith o' sense and pride o' worth," and we have a picture of "the honest man" of Burns, who

> "Tho' e'er sae poor,
> Is king o' men for a' that."

AUTHOR'S PREFACE.

MY undertaking is now concluded, and I have the agreeable duty of thanking my friends for their aid, the public for its kindness, and critics for much mildness and forbearance. I at first imagined that three volumes, or at most four, would hold all I had to say; but as the work advanced, new sources of intelligence were opened. What was intended for a sketch took a more important form, and I soon perceived that I required more room, and greater fulness, both of narration and remark. The deaths, too, of such men as Lawrence and Jackson obliged me to extend my plan; nor am I sure that I have yet admitted all artists of merit and genius into my volumes.

In tracing the lives and delineating the characters of the chief men of our native school of art, I have endeavoured to be scrupulously impartial: it was my wish to speak warmly of merits and candidly of faults, and in no way to sacrifice my own opinion in matters either of taste or conduct. Yet, with all my care, I have, I fear, committed many mistakes. I had to gather intelligence from various sources, written and oral, and seek original matter on all sides. In extracting a consistent narrative from my many-coloured materials, I have not, I am afraid, always reconciled contradictions, or taken the true version of a story which had many variations.

I have incurred obligations to many friends during the course of the work, but to none so much as to Mr. Lockhart, who not only suggested the undertaking, but, when in town, has been so kind as to help me in its progress, often pruning what was redundant, and bringing light to what was obscure. Mr. Southey has likewise aided me, and by his too favourable expressions regarding the merits of my first volume, encouraged me much with the rest.

Lord Dover also has afforded me, in many cases, the advantage of his taste and knowledge. To the friendship of Sir Andrew Halliday I am indebted for all that is interesting in the life of Cosway; and the communications of those accomplished antiquaries, Mr. Charles Kirkpatrick Sharpe, of Hoddom, and Mr. David Laing, of Edinburgh, were invaluable to me when treating of artists of Scottish birth. Of the members of the Royal Academy, my friends Mr. Chantrey and Mr. Wilkie have assisted me the most; not so much with direct communications, as by conversation through which I obtained the advantage of their taste and experience.

I now bid farewell to a work which has occupied me many an evening hour. Had I been in a situation to bestow undivided attention on it, I might have rendered it worthier of my subject. As it is, I hope the public will not be less generous than a distinguished painter, who, in writing of the first five volumes, said, "I differ from you as to some small things, but I cordially agree with you in the general estimate of character, and judgment of works of genius."

A. C.

London, February 28, 1833.

LIBRARY OF THE BOMBAY BRANCH OF THE ROYAL ASIATIC

LIVES

OF

THE BRITISH PAINTERS.

INTRODUCTION.

IT was not without diffidence that I undertook this work; nor have I forgotten the satiric complaint of my countryman—"Will no one write a book on what he understands?"

But the hands which hold the pencil are not always willing or able to hold the pen, and artists of literary attainments are either more profitably employed, or prudent enough to avoid an undertaking where there is more certainty of censure than of praise. I may also urge, in extenuation of my temerity, that as art reflects nature, through nature it must be judged.

The history of art, and the lives, and characters, and works of its earlier professors, are scattered through many volumes, and are to be sought for in remote collections, private cabinets, and public galleries. Our paintings are widely diffused, nor are they all contained in the island; and the biographical materials collected by the indiscriminating diligence of Vertue, and brightened here and there by the wit or the sagacity of Walpole, lie strangely heaped together. The other sources of information consist chiefly of the lectures and discourses of the Professors, the accidental notice of the historian or the poet, anecdotes collected by lovers of gossip connected with eminent men, and certain detached biographies, dictated, some by the

affection of friends, others by the malevolence of enemies, but most of them drawn up with the hurried indifference of men writing for bread. Of these works some are concise and barren, others overflowing and diffuse, and all are more or less liable to be charged with inaccuracy of criticism, with describing what ought to be, rather than delineating what is.

From materials thus varied and contradictory, it is my wish to extract a clear and concise account of our early art, with the lives and characters of the most eminent British artists. Before the birth of Hogarth, there are many centuries in which we relied wholly on foreign skill With him, and after him, arose a succession of eminent painters, who have spread the fame of British art far and wide. Of their conduct as men I hope to speak with candour. Of their works I shall express my own sentiments, wherever I have the power of personal examination. Where this is impracticable—for many paintings are in foreign lands, some are shut up in inaccessible galleries, and others have perished through time or accident—I shall follow what are generally esteemed the safest authorities.

Though the lives of men devoted to silent study and secluded labour contain few of those incidents which embellish the biographies of more stirring spirits, yet they are scarcely less alluring and instructive. Their works are at once their actions and their history, and a record of the taste and feeling of the times in which they flourished. We love to know under what circumstances a great work of art was conceived and completed: it is pleasing to follow the vicissitudes of their fortunes whose genius has charmed us—to sympathize in their anxieties, and to witness their triumph.

Poetry, Painting, Sculpture, and Music, are the natural offspring of the heart of man. They are found among the most barbarous nations; they flourish among the most civilized; and springing from nature, and not from necessity or accident, they can never be wholly lost in the most disastrous changes. In this they differ from mere inventions; and, compared with mechanical discoveries,

are what a living tree is to a log of wood. It may indeed be said that the tongue of poetry is occasionally silent, and the hand of painting sometimes stayed; but this seems not to affect the ever-living principle which I claim as their characteristic. They are heard and seen again in their season, as the birds and flowers are at the coming of spring; and assert their title to such immortality as the things of earth may claim. It is true that the poetry of barbarous nations is rude, and their attempts at painting uncouth; yet even in these we may recognize the foreshadowings of future excellence, and something of the peculiar character which, in happier days, the genius of the same tribe is to stamp upon worthier productions. The future Scott, or Lawrence, or Chantrey, may be indicated afar off in the barbarous ballads, drawings, or carvings, of an early nation. Coarse nature and crude simplicity are the commencement, as elevated nature and elegant simplicity are the consummation; of art.

When the Spaniards invaded the palaces of Chili and Peru, they found them filled with works of art. Cook found considerable beauty of drawing and skill of workmanship in the ornamented weapons and war canoes of the islanders of the South Sea; and in the interior recesses of India, sculptures and paintings, of no common merit, are found in every village. In like manner, when Cæsar landed among the barbarians of Britain, he found them acquainted with arts and arms; and his savage successors, the Saxons, added to unextinguishable ferocity a love of splendour and a rude sense of beauty, still visible in the churches which they built, and the monuments which they erected to their princes and leaders. All those works are of that kind called ornamental: the graces of true art, the truth of action and the dignity of sentiment, are wanting; and they seem to have been produced by a sort of mechanical process, similar to that which creates figures in arras. Art is, indeed, of slow and gradual growth; like the oak, it is long of growing to maturity and strength. Much knowledge of colour, much skill of hand, much experience in human character, and a deep sense of light and shade, have to be acquired, to enable the pencil to embody the

conceptions of genius. The artist has to seek for all this in the accumulated mass of professional knowledge which time has gathered for his instruction: and with his best wisdom, and his happiest fortune, he can only add a little more information to the common stock, for the benefit of his successors. In no country has Painting risen suddenly into eminence. While Poetry takes wing at once, free and unincumbered, her sister is retarded in her ascent by the very mechanism to which she must at last owe at least half her glory. In Britain, Painting was centuries in throwing off the fetters of mere mechanical skill, and in rising into the region of genius. The original spirit of England had appeared in many a noble poem, while the two sister arts were still servilely employed in preserving incredible legends, in taking the likeness of the last saint whom credulity had added to the calendar, and in confounding the acts of the apostles in the darkness of allegory.

Henry the Third, a timid and pious king, founded many cathedrals, and enriched them with sculpture and with painting to an extent and with a skill which merited the commendation of Flaxman.[1] The royal instructions of 1233 are curious, and inform us of the character of art at that remote period, and of the subordinate condition of its professors. In Italy indeed, as well as in England, an artist was then, and long after, considered as a mere mechanic. He was commonly at once a carver of wood, a maker of figures, a house and heraldry painter, a carpenter, an upholsterer, and a mason; and sometimes, over and

[1] The name of William Torel has been handed down as a sculptor of this period. To him are attributed the fine recumbent statues of Henry the Third and Queen Eleanor on their tombs in Westminster Abbey, which are about the earliest specimens of English metal statuary we possess. There are casts from several of his works in the South Kensington Museum, where likewise may be found casts of several other beautiful works of English sculpture of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. Unfortunately the names of the authors of these works have not been preserved, or else perhaps it might not be so easy to slight early English art, or to assert that "Genius had not then come to its aid." Though foreign workmen were undoubtedly employed in the building of our cathedrals, much of the work done bears a genuine national stamp.—Ed.

above all this, he was a tailor. Genius had not then come to the aid of art, and paintings and statues were ordered exactly as chairs and tables are now.

Much of the undisciplined talent of the nation was employed by Henry the Third on the building and embellishing of his Cathedrals and palaces: foreign artists, too, were imported; and the manufacture of saints and legends was carried on under the inspection of one William, a Florentine.[1] Those productions take their position in history, and claim the place, if not the merit, of works of taste and talent. At best they were but a kind of religious heraldry: the most beautiful of the virgins and the most dignified of the apostles were rude, clumsy, and ungraceful, with ill-proportioned bodies and most rueful looks.

That the religious paintings of that period were such as I have described them, there is sufficient evidence; that those of a national or domestic kind were similar in character may be safely inferred. There is no account of the nature of those paintings which belonged to the royal Castle of Winchester; but we may conclude that they were not the same as those which aided the priests of the abbeys in explaining religion to an illiterate people. Walpole presumes—he says not on what authority—that when Henry the Third directed his chamber in Winchester to be painted with "the same pictures as before," they were of an historical nature. Historical, or religious, or domestic, the passage referred to by Walpole proves that the art of painting had been introduced early among us: perhaps it even countenances the tradition that it is as old as Bede. Vertue indeed urges, with more nationality than probability, the claim of England to early knowledge in art, and our acquaintance with the mystery of oil colours, before they appeared in Italy. In sculpture considerable talent

[1] This artist received a salary of sixpence a day for his services. We know the names also of several English artists who worked for Henry the Third. Master Edward of Westminster, or Edward Fitzodo, supposed to have been the son of the king's goldsmith Odo, appears to have been master of the works at Westminster; Master Walter had twenty marks paid him for "pictures in our great chamber at Westminster;" and Master John of Gloucester, the king's plasterer, and Master John of St. Omers, are also mentioned in the records of this reign.—Ed.

was shown before this period; but he who proves that equal skill was exhibited in Painting has likewise to prove that the artists were Englishmen—a circumstance contradicting tradition, and unsupported by history. The early works of art in this island were from the hands of foreigners. It was the interest of Rome to supply us with painters as well as priests, whose mutual talents and mutual zeal might maintain, and extend, and embellish religion. There is no honour surrendered in relinquishing our claims to such productions; the best of them displayed no genius, and exhibited little skill.[1]

The arts seem to have suffered some neglect during the reigns of Edward the First and Second—the chronicles of the church and the state annalist are alike silent. Painting, which requires seclusion and repose, was ill suited to the temper of the conqueror of Wales and Scotland, and was not likely to obtain patronage from a fierce nobility, whose feet were seldom out of the stirrup. All art was neglected save that which embellished armour, and weapons, and military trappings. Elegance was drowned in absurd pomp, and luxury in grotesque extravagance.

Art and knowledge were more in favour during the long reign of Edward the Third. Poetry and learning were of his train; a better taste and a more temperate splendour distinguished the court; the country became rich as well as powerful, and the martial barbarism of the preceding reigns was sobered down into something like elegance. The ladies laid aside those formidable pyramids which made the face seem the centre of the body, and the nobles escaped out of the courtly boots of the first Edward, with the square turned-up toes fastened to the knees by chains of gold. There was everywhere a growing sense of what was becoming and elegant, yet the character of the times was decidedly martial. The actions of the Black Edward in France and Spain gave lustre to the arms of England. A spirit for martial adventure, tempered with high feeling and romantic generosity, spread among the nobles. He was accounted of little note in the land who preferred domestic

[1] See *ante*, note 1.—Ed.

repose to active war, or who imagined that the best productions of the human mind could be compared to the fame of a well-fought field. Sentiments and feelings such as these ushered in chivalry; to the influence of which we owe so much, since it brought with it mildness, mercy, high honour and heroic daring, and many of the sweets and amenities of social life.

The art of painting during this reign partook of the warlike spirit of the king; the royal commissions for saints, virgins, and apostles gave way to orders for gilded armour, painted shields, and emblazoned banners—St. Edward was less in request than St. George. No works of art were produced in this period which induce me to lament their loss, and the oblivion which has come over them.[1]

[1] The beautiful chapel of St. Stephen's, Westminster, so long the House of Commons, was rebuilt by Edward the Third, and was decorated by his express command in the richest manner possible. Sir Charles Eastlake speaks of the rebuilding of this chapel as being "an important event in the history of Northern Art," and of the paintings with which it was decorated as "among the most interesting specimens of transalpine art extant." * Unfortunately these interesting paintings can scarcely now be said to be "extant," only a few relics of them having been preserved in the fire which destroyed the old Houses of Parliament in 1834. These relics are now in the British Museum, and although greatly injured, show that they must have been executed by a skilful hand. The figures, though of course stiff, are not entirely without grace, and there is even some attempt at expression in the faces. The whole of the walls of this rich little chapel were painted over with Scripture histories and the representations of historical events. These appear to have been executed in oil colours, on the prepared surface of the interior stone-work, and were evidently the work of an artist or of artists who possessed a good knowledge of all technical processes. Mention is indeed made in an old German MS. of the fourteenth century, dealing with methods and recipes for painting, of the "London practice" as if it was something peculiar. "If you wish," says the author, "to make a beautiful clothlet blue colour after the *Ludnun*, i.e., *London* practice," proceed according to the recipe given. This evidently shows that the London painters of this date were recognized by their foreign brethren. The *blue colour* even now is apparent in the remains saved from St. Stephen's.

In this same chapel were also numerous sculptures of a good style of workmanship, especially on the screen which stood at the entrance to the door. The dignity and grace of some of these figures is said to

* Eastlake. "Materials for the History of Oil Painting."

During the civil wars which succeeded, the waste of human life was immense; the contest was fierce and of long continuance; and the destruction of castles and churches involved the treasures of knowledge in ruin, and checked the progress of the elegant arts. In the intervals of repose, indeed, painting was not idle; but her efforts displayed neither originality of thought nor skill of execution. For many reigns art continued to work patiently at its old manufacture. No new paths were explored; nor had the painter any other aim than that of mechanically reproducing the resemblance of that which had preceded him. Those works are the first blind gropings of art after form and colour. The faces are without thought, the limbs without proportion, and the draperies without variety.

Among them there is one which merits notice, *chiefly* because it is one of the earliest of our attempts at historical portraiture which can be authenticated. It is a painting on wood; the figures are less than life, and represent Henry the Fifth and his relations. It measures four feet six inches long, by four feet four inches high, and was in the days of Catholic power the altar-piece of the church of Shene. An angel stands in the centre holding in his hands the expanding coverings of two tents, out of which the king, with three princesses, and the queen, with four princesses, are proceeding to kneel at two altars, where crosses, and sceptres, and books are lying. They wear long and flowing robes, with loose hair, and have crowns on their heads. In the background, St. George appears in the air, combating with the dragon, while Cleodelinda kneels in prayer beside a lamb. It is not, indeed, quite certain that this curious work was made during the reign of Henry the Fifth, but there can be little doubt of its being painted as early as that of his son. The monarch was not more fortunate than the apostles of the church; for neither his heroic character, nor the presence of princesses of the blood-royal, could animate the conception,

have been quite remarkable, considering the date at which they were executed. The Society of Antiquaries has published coloured copies of the paintings formerly existing in St. Stephen's Chapel. "Vetusta Monumenta," vol. vi.—Ed.

or raise the artist above the usual cold level of barbarism.

Painting, nevertheless, may be said to have advanced a step or two during that period of blood and confusion, and the love of art was gaining a little ground. The demand for saints and legends was sensibly diminishing; a more rational taste in all things was dawning; men's sympathies, national and social, mingled freely in literature, and moderately in art. Portraits were frequently attempted; but they are grim and grotesque—present an image of death rather than of life: and show but glimpses of that feeling and truth of character which distinguish true works of art. But though the draperies seem copied from the winding-sheet rather than from the robe, and the faces from death rather than from life; still it was something to attempt to follow nature, and showed a spirit willing to be freed from the shackles of imitation, and a desire to escape from the thraldom of the church.

At this period the character of an English artist was curiously compounded; he was at once architect, sculptor, carpenter, goldsmith, armourer, jeweller, saddler, tailor, and painter. There is extant, in Dugdale, a curious example of the character of the times, and a scale by which we can measure the public admiration of art. It is a contract between the Earl of Warwick and John Ray, citizen and tailor, London, in which the latter undertakes to execute the emblazonry of the earl's pageant in his situation of ambassador to France. In the tailor's bill, gilded griffins mingle with Virgin Marys; painted streamers for battle or procession, with the twelve apostles; and "one coat for his grace's body, lute with fine gold," takes precedence of St. George and the Dragon.

The superstition of the church formed a grotesque union with the frivolities of heraldry and the follies of courtiers and kings. The baron who patronized in his youth the gilded pomps and painted vanities of the court and camp, entertained other feelings as he approached the grave, and at once soothed a timorous conscience, and appeased a rapacious church, by benefactions to abbeys of painted saints and profitable manors. This was the true age of barbaric splen-

dour; mankind wanted the taste to use their wealth wisely, and knew no way to estimate excellence save by price. The quantities of silver and gold, precious stones, and expensive colours, employed in works of art, were immense. Art, unequal to the task of touching the heart by either action or sentiment, appealed to our sense of what is costly, and trusted to her materials. The taste and genius of the Greeks enabled them to use rich materials, and perhaps to use them wisely; but our fathers acted as if all the charm lay in abundance of costly things. We had gilded kings with golden crowns; gilded angels with golden halos; and gilded virgins sitting nursing golden children on golden clouds: the heaven above was gold, and so was the earth beneath.

Yet art, in what was conceived to be a far humbler pursuit, made some atonement for all this. Before, and some time after, the invention of printing, literature was diffused over the land by means of the pen, and a skilful transcriber had more than the reputation which a clever printer enjoys now. Of the volumes thus produced, many were eminently beautiful: a single volume was the subject of a dying bequest, and the works of a favourite author were received as pledges for the repayment of large loans, and even for the faith of treaties. The hand of the painter added greatly to the value of those volumes. The illustration of missals, and of books of chivalry and romance, became a favourite pursuit with the nobles, and a lucrative employment to artists. Illustrations on this scale required a delicate hand which excelled in miniature resemblances, and a fancy in keeping with the genius of the author. Many of those performances are beautiful. But their beauty is less that of sentiment than of colour. In some of the most remarkable there is vivid richness and delicacy of hue approaching the lustre of oil-painting. They are valuable also for their evidence of the state of art—for the light which they throw on the general love of mankind for literature; and for the information which they indirectly convey concerning the condition of our courts and nobles.

The subjects of those illustrations are very various. They represent the dresses, ceremonies, and portraits of

the chief men of the times, while they embody the conceptions of the author. They were richly bound, and clasped with silver or gold, and deposited in painted cabinets and in tapestried rooms. They were exhibited on great occasions, and their embossed sides and embellished leaves were submitted to nobles, and knights, and poets. They were the pride and formed part of the riches of their possessors. The art of printing, and the Reformation, which that art so greatly served, threw those illuminated rarities first into the shade, and afterwards into the fire. The zeal of the reformers was let loose upon the whole progeny of the church of Rome, and wooden saints and gilded missals served to consume one another. The blunt rustics and illiterate nobles, who composed the torrent which swept away the long-established glories of the papal church, confounded the illuminated volumes of poets and philosophers with the superstitious offspring of the Lady of the Seven Hills. Over this havoc there has been much lamentation. I grieve for the literature—for the illuminations my sorrow is more moderate. Into the latter the true genius of art had not ascended, as sap into the tree, to refresh it into life and cover it with beauty. They looked like processions of lay-figures, rather than groups of breathing beings.

The art of tapestry as well as the art of illuminating books, aided in diffusing a love of painting over the island. It was carried to a high degree of excellence. The earliest account of its appearance in England is during the reign of Henry the Eighth, but there is no reason to doubt that it was well known and in general esteem much earlier. The traditional account, that we were instructed in it by the Saracens, has probably some foundation. The ladies encouraged this manufacture by working at it with their own hands; and the rich aided by purchasing it in vast quantities whenever regular practitioners appeared in the market. It found its way into church and palace, chamber and hall. It served at once to cover and adorn cold and comfortless walls. It added warmth, and, when snow was on the hill and ice in the stream, gave an air of social snugness which has deserted some of our modern mansions.

At first the figures and groups, which rendered this manufacture popular, were copies of favourite paintings; but, as taste improved and skill increased, they showed more of originality in their conceptions, if not more of nature in their forms. They exhibited, in common with all other works of art, the mixed taste of the times—a grotesque union of classical and Hebrew history—of martial life and pastoral repose—of Greek gods and Romish saints. Absurd as such combinations certainly were, and destitute of those beauties of form, and delicate gradations and harmony of colour which distinguish paintings worthily so called—still, when the hall was lighted up, and living faces thronged the floor, the silent inhabitants of the walls would seem, in the eyes of our ancestors, something very splendid. As painting rose in fame, tapestry sunk in estimation. The introduction of a lighter and less massive mode of architecture abridged the space for its accommodation, and by degrees the stiff and fanciful creations of the loom vanished from our walls. The art is now neglected. I am sorry for this, because I cannot think meanly of an art which engaged the heads and hands of the ladies of England, and gave to the tapestried hall of elder days fame little inferior to what now waits on a gallery of paintings.

During the reign of Henry the Seventh, painting rendered Italy the most renowned nation of the earth; but till near his death our island continued, as of old, in gross ignorance of all that genius, beauty or grandeur, give to art. Now and then the effigy of a prince or an earl was painted—legends were imaged forth for the church—pageants were stitched and daubed for the nobles—stones were quarried for the manufacture of saints—trees cut down in the royal parks to be chipped into apostles—and art, to the ordinary eye, seemed in full employment. But true art there was none.[1]

It would neither be instructive nor amusing to give an

[1] In the reign of Henry the Sixth, England at all events possessed one native artist of high merit. This was William Austen, the sculptor of the beautiful monument to Richard, Earl of Warwick, in St. Mary's Church in Warwick. This work is considered by Wornum to be little

account of those lampoons upon human nature which our painters at this period perpetrated under the name of portraits. The likeness of Jane Shore will enable us to form some notion of the existing skill in the art. Tradition and history unite in conferring great personal beauty on this unfortunate woman, and have thus impressed an image of loveliness upon our minds which few painters, perhaps, could realize. The Jane Shore of the artists has no charms such as could have proved fatal to her peace. She possesses none of those attractions—

"Which from the wisest win their best resolves."

Sir Thomas More has given us a glowing account of one of her portraits: it is one of the oldest descriptions of an English work of art, and I shall transcribe the passage:—"Her stature was mean, her hair of a dark yellow, her face round and full, her eyes gray: delicate harmony being betwixt each part's proportion and each proportion's colour; her body fat, white, and smooth; her countenance cheerful, and like to her condition. The picture which I have seen of her was such as she rose out of her bed in the morning, having nothing on but a rich mantle cast under one arm and over her shoulder, and sitting on a chair on which one arm did lie." "Her forehead," adds Walpole, describing her portrait at Eton, "is remarkably large, her mouth and the rest of her features small, her hair of the admired golden colour: a lock of it, if we may believe tradition, is still extant in the collection of the

inferior in design to that of Austen's great Italian contemporaries, Donatello and Ghiberti.

Henry the Seventh also seems to have been not unmindful of the revival of art that was going on in Italy and elsewhere in his time. He employed several foreign artists, and it is by no means certain that Van Mander was incorrect in asserting that Mabuse came to England in this reign, though, strange to say, no record of his visit here can be found. Another Flemish painter, however, Lucas Horembout of Ghent, undoubtedly settled in England either in this reign or the next, as also his father Gerard and his sister Susanna, of whom Dürer says in his journal that "it is a great wonder a woman should do so well." Immerzeel records of this Susanna that she married an English sculptor named Whorstley.—Ed.

Countess of Cardigan, and is marvellously beautiful, seeming to be powdered with golden dust, without prejudice to its silken delicacy."[1]

We must receive such descriptions with caution. The words of Sir Thomas More are expressive of a portrait beautiful both in conception and execution—a work seemingly beyond the power of our artists, at that period, to produce. He probably thought it excellent, because others with which he compared it were utterly abominable. In a better informed age, John Evelyn, a gentleman of taste and talents, pronounced the heathen atrocities of Verrio, in Windsor Castle, sublime compositions, and their painter the first of mankind. The silenced gods of the ancients infested then, and long after, both our literature and our conversation—and the accomplished Evelyn was pleased to see those divinities embodied, of whom he had read so much.

The commencement of the reign of Henry the Eighth was auspicious for art. The monarch was young, learned, liberal, and gallant—a lover of the ladies, and of all sorts of magnificence. He desired to rival the splendour of foreign courts, and, if money could have accomplished it, he would have surpassed Charles the Fifth and Francis the First in glory. He opened his treasury, and scattered his father's hoards with no sparing hand. Foreign artists began to appear at court, and an enthusiasm for works of talent was awakened. Skilful portrait-painting—the noble art of expressing the sentiments of the soul in the lineaments of the face—rose more and more in estimation, and England seemed in a fair way of having a school of art created in her own spirit. A sore evil, however, accompanied the foreign artists to England—the incurable malady of allegory. This disease in art

[1] There were three examples of this early traditional portrait at the First National Portrait Exhibition. The one here mentioned as being at Eton, the one at Hampton Court, and another belonging to King's College, Cambridge. This work can scarcely be regarded as a portrait in the sense in which we now understand that term. It is probably purely imaginary, painted at some later date as a memento of this unfortunate beauty. The portrait of Rosamond Clifford (Fair Rosamond) is another instance of a traditionary portrait of this kind.—Ed.

arose from the misuse of learning—from a desire of cheap adulation, and an utter poverty of fancy. An art was discovered which soothed the pride of learning, and was too mystical for the vulgar—the art of personifying virtues, and employing heathen gods to do the duty of sound divines. Minerva and Venus, and Juno and Jupiter, with all the exploded progeny of Olympus, were seen following in the train of Christian monarchs with high-heeled boots, laced cravats, and three-storied wigs. This bastard offspring of learning swarmed in our palaces and churches. The pedantry of poets, the mysteries of the church, and the grotesque combinations of heraldry, all united in encouraging this absurd deviation from truth and nature.[1]

Art, in no nation, could well be lower than it was in England when Henry the Eighth succeeded his father, and artists never stood lower, either in the scale of genius or in the estimation of mankind. They were numbered with the common menials of the court; they had their livery suit, their yearly dole, and their weekly wages.[2] Their works too were worthy of their condition. I transcribe the following singular memorandum from a book belonging to the Church of St. Mary, in Bristol: the subject referred to is a religious pageant, which seems to have been composed of strange materials, and to have been the united production of all the incorporations.

"Memorandum: That Master Cumings hath delivered: the 4th day of July, in the year of our Lord, 1470, to Mr. Nicholas Bettes, Vicar of Radcliffe, Moses Couteryn, Philip Bartholomew, and John Brown, Procurators of Radcliffe, beforesaid, a new sepulchre, well gilt, and cover thereto; an image of God Almighty rising out of the said sepulchre, with all the ordinance that longeth thereto; that is to say,—Item. A lath, made of timber, and iron work thereto. Item. Thereto longeth heaven, made of timber and stained

[1] This is true of a later period; but allegory did not take its rise, as here implied, at the court of Henry the Eighth.—Ed.

[2] This was the case in other countries besides England. Even the great Jan Van Eyck held the office of "*Varlet de chambre*" to Philippe le Bon, and had his "yearly dole" or "weekly wages." Such offices were by no means undignified, but often involved great trust and honour.—Ed.

cloth. Item. Hell, made of timber and iron-work, with devils in number thirteen. Item. Four knights, armed, keeping the sepulchre, with their weapons in their hands, that is to say, two axes and two spears. Item. Three pair of angels' wings; four angels, made of timber, and well painted. Item. The Father, the crown and visage; the ball, with a cross upon it, well gilt with fine gold. Item. The Holy Ghost coming out of heaven into the sepulchre. Item. Longeth to the angels four chevelers."

The rude simplicity of this curious memorial, and the singular mixture of carving and painting, and chipping and hewing, which the work required, will speak for themselves. Scarcely less ludicrous are the written instructions which Henry the Eighth left for a monument to his own memory. "The king shall appear on horseback," says this strange document, "of the stature of a goodly man, while over him shall appear the image of God the Father, holding the king's soul in his left hand, and his right hand extended in the act of benediction." The whole was to be in bronze, and much of it was completed, but the parsimony of Elizabeth prevailed over her respect for her father; the work was stopped, and the Puritan parliament sold the whole for £600.

A reformation came which affected religion, literature, art, and the civil and social condition of mankind. This great change arose not, as has been widely asserted, through the voluptuousness of the king—for that was but as a drop to the torrent; it sprung from the impulse which knowledge had given to the nation, and which nothing could withstand or resist. It is to be regretted that in this salutary change from superstition to wisdom, there were men found rude and savage enough to lift their hands against much that was worthy and valuable. We may doubt if the pictures which were destroyed in the English churches are to be regretted very sorely; but the Reformation struck at the scope and spirit of Italian art. The war which it waged against the superstitious beliefs and idle ceremonies of the old church, included not only her images—(which had been at least abused to idolatrous ends)—but the whole of her religious paintings. Our re-

formers were purifiers of religion, not patrons of art; nor could they perceive any sort of connection between the rules of belief and moral obedience laid down by our Saviour, and the glowing creations and lively fictions of Italian limners. They perceived, too, that the weak and the ignorant considered even painted altar-pieces as a sort of divinities; so, by one decisive movement, they swept them away, and crushed the religious art of Italy in the very act of filling our churches with its splendid products. Thus did the early reformers; thus the weak Somerset—the politic Elizabeth—and the zealous Puritans of the times of Cromwell. These last completed the crusade by stabling their chargers in the stalls of the cathedrals.[1]

Portraiture survived the general wreck: and Henry the Eighth, who was as vain as he was cruel, protected and sheltered it at court, where, indeed, all was safe except virtue and innocence. He was sensible of the lustre which literature and art can shed upon the throne; he saw the rival kings of France and Spain marching to battle or to negotiation with poets and painters in their trains, and he envied not a little the unattainable brilliancy of their courts.[2] Vanity and ostentation, rather than true love of art, induced him to patronize Hans Holbein, and to fix him in England by kindness and caresses, as well as by a regular pension.

This was the first painter of eminence who came to England, and with him the art in which genius shines may be said to have commenced. His name had already been

[1] Notwithstanding all these methods of destruction the number of old paintings which still exist in our churches is very considerable. The Science and Art Department of the Committee of Council on Education has lately published a pamphlet containing a list of buildings in England in which have been found wall paintings and other painted decorations, of dates previous to the middle of the sixteenth century. The list is by no means perfect, yet it enumerates no fewer than 568 churches and other buildings in England in which paintings still exist.—Ed.

[2] Henry the Eighth is said to have invited Raphael, Primaticcio, and some other great Italian painters to England, but none of them chose to exile themselves among the barbarians, as the English were then considered in polite Italy. Leonardo da Vinci is almost the only example we have of a great Italian master taking service with a foreign potentate. Several minor Italian painters, however, came to England, either on Henry's

spread far and wide by the obvious and peculiar beauty of his productions, and by the eloquent praises of Erasmus. Stung with the neglect of his talents at Basle, his native place, and his domestic peace embittered by the froward temper of his wife, he was willing to seek for peace and profit in another land. He accordingly came to England in 1526, in the thirtieth year of his age.[1] This island, at that period, presented a fine field for the display of a creative and original genius. England had dismissed the pageantry of the Romish Church; and—cleared of all preceding works of the pencil, with a taste improved and a mind enlarged, and great wealth—whoever appeared willing to work in her spirit, she was ready to welcome and reward him. The genius of Holbein was too literal and mechanical for this. He was skilful in plain fidelity of resemblance, and could imitate whatever stood before him in living flesh and blood; but he was deficient in imagination—in the rare art of embodying visions of grace and beauty.

He wrought at the court of Henry with a diligence, and, what was better, with a skill new to the country. His works are chiefly portraits, and are all distinguished by truth and by nature. His Sir Thomas More has an air of boldness and vigour, and a look at once serene and acute, which attest the sincerity of the resemblance; his Anne

invitation, or by their own desire. Among them were Luca Penni, and Girolamo da Trevisi, the latter of whom possibly designed the large historical paintings of the Field of the Cloth of Gold, formerly at Windsor, but which now decorate the rooms of the Society of Antiquaries at Burlington House. Henry also had no fewer than three Serjeant painters before Holbein's time, namely, Anthony Toto, Andrew Wright, and John Brown, who built the Painters' Hall for the Company of "Painter Stainers," whose first charter was granted in the reign of Edward the Sixth. The portrait of this worthy is said to be still preserved, but I cannot find where it now is.—Ed.

[1] Holbein's birth is now considered to have taken place in 1498, which would make him only twenty-eight at this time. The reasons here assigned for his leaving Basle are mere surmise, but it is certain that he came to England in 1526, bringing with him a letter of introduction from Erasmus to Sir Thomas More, who received him most kindly and lodged him in his own house at Chelsea. He was afterwards taken into the service of the king with an annual salary of £30 besides payment for his works.—Ed.

Boleyn is graceful and volatile; his King Henry bluff and joyous, with jealous eyes and an imperious brow. He was not always so faithful to nature, and knew how to practise the flattery of his profession. He lavished so much beauty on Anne of Cleves, that the king, who had fallen in love with the picture, when the original came to his arms, regarded her with aversion and disgust, exclaimed against the gross flattery of Hans, and declared she was not a woman, but a Flanders mare. This anecdote, however, confirms the painter's claim to fidelity in his other likenesses: he was no habitual flatterer, or Henry would not have given implicit faith to him. On another occasion Holbein went to Flanders to draw the picture of the Duchess-Dowager of Milan—the intended successor to Jane Seymour. She was a princess of equivocal virtue, but of ready wit. "Alas!" said she, "the king of England asks me to be his wife; what answer shall I give to him? I am unfortunate enough to have but one head; had I two, one of them should be at his highness's service."

It is traditionally asserted that the king employed Holbein to paint the portraits of the fairest young ladies in his kingdom, that, in case of the frailty of a queen, he might go to his gallery and select her successor. This story, which I can desire no one to credit, seeing that his majesty had ready access to the originals, is countenanced by an anecdote related by Vermander. One day, while the artist was painting in private the portrait of a favourite lady for the king, a great lord unexpectedly found his way into the chamber. The painter, a brawny powerful man, and somewhat touchy of temper, threw the intruder downstairs, bolted the door, ran to the king by a private passage, fell on his knees, asked for pardon, and obtained it. In came the courtier, and made his complaint. "By God's splendour," exclaimed the king (this was his customary oath), "you have not to do with Hans, but with me. Of seven peasants I can make seven lords, but I cannot make one Hans Holbein, even out of seven lords."

The works of Holbein were once very numerous in England, but some were destroyed during the great civil wars; others were sold abroad by the Puritan parliament,

and many perished when the great palace of Whitehall was burned. The original drawings, eighty-nine in number, which he made of the chief persons of Henry's court, are the greatest curiosity in her present Majesty's collection. Charles the First exchanged them with the Earl of Pembroke for the splendid St. George of Raphael; Pembroke gave them to the Earl of Arundel; they suffered something in the vicissitudes of the civil war, and at last found their way back, it is not remembered how, into the Royal Gallery. "A great part of these drawings," observes Walpole, "are exceedingly fine, and in one respect preferable to the finished pictures, as they are drawn in a bold and free manner. And though they have little more than the outline, being drawn with chalk upon paper stained of a flesh colour, and scarce shaded at all, there is a strength and vivacity in them equal to the most perfect portraits."

Holbein died of the plague in 1554.[1] His works have sometimes an air of stiffness; but they have always the look of truth and life. He painted with great rapidity and ease, wrought with the left hand,[2] and dashed off a portrait at a few sittings. He was gay and joyous, lived freely, and spent his pension of two hundred florins and the money he received for his works with a careless liberality. He had a strong frame, a swarthy sensual face, a neck like a bull, and an eye unlikely to endure contradiction. It would be unjust to his fame to withhold the information that his talents were not confined to pictures. Like other eminent artists, his mind took a range beyond the brush and the easel. He was an able architect: he modelled and he carved. He was skilful, too, in designing ornaments, and in making drawings for printed books; some of which he is said to have cut himself. Sir Hans Sloane had a book of jewels of his designing which is now in the British

[1] The date of Holbein's death has always been a subject of dispute, and even quite recently the controversy respecting it has been revived. The evidence, however, seems conclusive that this master must have died in London between the 7th of October and the 29th of November, 1543.—Ed.

[2] There is no authority for this tradition. In his portrait in the Arundel collection he holds his brush in his right hand, as also in the Duke of Buccleuch's miniature.—Ed.

Museum. Inigo Jones had another book of his designs for weapons, hilts, ornaments, scabbards, sword-belts, buttons, hooks, hat-bands, girdles, shoe-clasps, knives, forks, salt-cellars, and vases.

Neither the presence of Holbein, nor the influence of his works, could prevail against the mercantile mode of bargaining for works of art; they continued to be weighed out or measured like other commercial commodities. An artist was looked upon as a manufacturer, and his productions were esteemed according to their extent, and the time consumed in making them. Francis Williamson, of Southwark, and Symon Symonds, of Westminster, glaziers, on the 3rd of May, in the 18th of Henry the Eighth, undertook to "glaze curiously and sufficiently four windows of the upper story of the church of King's College, Cambridge, of orient colours and imagery, of the story of the Old Law and of the New Law, after the manner and goodness in every point of the King's new chapel at Westminster, also according to the manner of Bernard Flower, glazier, deceased, to be paid after the rate of sixteenpence per foot for the glass." Other engagements of the same nature might be cited, all proving that works of English art were bargained for by measure, and that groups and figures, requiring taste and genius to create, were ordered like bricks and tiles, by the dozen and the long hundred. "Yet as much," observes Walpole, "as we imagine ourselves arrived at higher perfection in the arts, it would not be easy for a master of a college now to go into St. Margaret's parish or Southwark, and bespeak the roof of such a chapel as that of King's College, and a dozen or two of windows so admirably drawn, and order them to be sent home by such a day, as if he was bespeaking a chequered pavement or a church Bible." It is remarkable that one of the finest of those windows contains the story of Sapphira and Ananias, as told by Raphael in the Cartoons.

Painting maintained its place in popular estimation during the brief and guilty reign of Mary. Sir Antonio Moro, for his portrait of the queen, received from Philip a chain of gold, with the more substantial addition of a pension of four hundred a-year as painter to the king.

Moro followed Philip into Spain, lived in much splendour, and in close intimacy too with the monarch, which was not without its danger. One day, it is said, Philip laid his hand jestingly on Moro's shoulder in the presence of his courtiers, and, as the artist was professionally engaged, he touched the royal hand with a brush dipped in carmine. The courtiers stood aghast at this criminal breach of court etiquette, and Philip himself surveyed for a moment in silence that awful hand, which even ladies knelt to kiss with a serious look. The painter saw his error—he knelt, sued for forgiveness, and obtained it from the king—but not from the inquisition, who believed, or said, that Moro had got from the English heretics a charm wherewith he bewitched Philip. He retired from a country so dangerous for a man of free manners, and pleased the Duke of Alva so much with some portraits of favourite ladies, that he was made receiver of the revenue of West Flanders, a lucrative appointment—whereon Sir Antonio forthwith threw away his brushes and burnt his easel.

Queen Elizabeth courted wits and coquetted with warriors, but disregarded art and artists. She encouraged nothing that promised to be expensive, and the strong Protestant feeling of the nation, still writhing under the recollection of her sister's severities, excluded madonnas and saints, and even apostles, from the cathedrals. "There is no evidence," says Walpole, in his own sarcastic way, "that Elizabeth had much taste for painting; but she loved pictures of herself. In them she could appear really handsome, and yet, to do the profession justice, they seem to have flattered her the least of all her dependants: there is not a single portrait of her that one can call beautiful. The profusion of ornaments with which they are loaded are marks of her continual fondness for dress, while they entirely exclude all grace, and leave no more room for a painter's genius than if he had been employed to copy an Indian idol totally composed of hands and necklaces. A pale Roman nose, a head of hair loaded with crowns and powdered with diamonds, a vast ruff, a vaster fardingale, and a bushel of pearls, are the features by which everybody knows at once the pictures of Queen Elizabeth."

Elizabeth was determined to know everything, and wished to appear skilful in matters which she had neither studied, nor could, without study, fairly comprehend. She directed artists, and laid down rules for their productions, not for the advantage of the nation, but for her own. On one occasion, when she sat for her portrait, she ordered it to be painted "with the light coming neither from the right nor from the left, without shadows, in an open garden light:"—a mere conceit—and the conceit, too, of one unacquainted with the principles of the art she presumed to direct. Raleigh informs us that she ordered all pictures of herself, done by unskilful artists, to be collected and burned; and in 1563 she issued a proclamation forbidding all persons, save "especial cunning painters, to draw her likeness." She quarrelled at last with her looking-glass as well as with her painters; during the latter years of her life the maids of honour removed mirrors, as they would have removed poison, from the apartments about to be occupied by the virgin queen.

Lucas de Heere, a native of Ghent, a poet, a painter, and a wit, came in this reign to England, where he executed several portraits. He was employed to paint the gallery of the Earl of Lincoln, in which he represented the characters of several nations. When he came to the English, he painted a naked man with a pair of shears and cloths of various colours lying beside him, as a satire on our fickleness in fashions. This thought is borrowed from Andrew Borde, who, to the first chapter of his Induction to Knowledge, prefixed a naked Englishman, accompanied with these lines:—

> "I am an Englishman, and naked I stand here,
> Musing in mind what raiment I shall wear;
> Now I will wear this, and now I will wear that,
> And now will I wear—I cannot well tell what."

De Heere, proceeding more warily with the queen than with the nation, depicted her majesty in a rich dress, with crown, sceptre, and globe, coming out of her palace with Juno, Pallas, and Venus, as her companions; Juno drops her sceptre, Venus scatters her roses, and Cupid flings away

his arrows. The poverty of the invention is as remarkable as the intolerable grossness of the flattery.[1]

The great Earl of Nottingham, whose defeat of the Armada established the throne of his mistress, employed Cornelius Vroom, a native of Haarlem, to draw the designs of his successive victories over the Spaniards, and the whole was wrought in tapestry by Francis Spiering. It is a noble and national work. It is divided into ten battles, and contains the portraits of twenty-seven naval commanders. These portraits have the air of real likenesses; indeed, as the tapestry was wrought while the original persons were living, the artist could not well indulge in imaginary features. The painter had for his drawing one hundred pieces of gold; the arras cost ten pounds one shilling per ell, a high price, and, as it measures seven hundred and eight ells, the whole amounted to upwards of seven thousand pounds. This was a work worthy of the noble House of Howard. James the First repaid the money to the earl, and the crown became proprietor of the work; and the Puritan commonwealth placed it (where it still remains) in the House of Lords—then used by the Commons as a committee-room.

Towards the close of Elizabeth's reign, Hilliard and Oliver began to distinguish themselves, and they are probably the earliest natives of this island who have any claim to the name of artists. The former was the son of the Queen's goldsmith, and was allowed to study from the heads of Holbein: the parentage of the latter is unknown, "nor is it of any importance," says Walpole, "for he was a genius, and they transmit more honour by blood than they can receive." Hilliard enjoyed the protection of the court, and became popular;[2] Oliver obtained the patronage of the nation, and merited all which it bestowed. The chief

[1] Federigo Zucchero was another eminent foreigner who was employed by Queen Elizabeth. It is of him the story is told of the queen requesting to be painted without shadows. Mark Gerard, or Garrard of Bruges, was likewise a favourite portrait painter at Elizabeth's court. Three portraits by him are in the possession of the Marquis of Exeter, and several others were exhibited at the First National Portrait Exhibition.—Ed.

[2] Five portraits attributed to Hilliard appeared at the First National Portrait Exhibition, among them a careful portrait of Queen Elizabeth,

merit, indeed, of Hilliard is, that he helped to form the taste and discipline the hand of Oliver. The works of the latter are all miniatures; in the estimation of judges they rival those of Holbein, and may be compared with those of Cooper, who, living in a freer age, and studying under Vandyke, scarce compensates by all the boldness of his expression for the severe nature and delicate fidelity of the elder hand. Oliver died in 1617, aged sixty-two years, leaving behind him many works of exquisite skill and beauty.

If the long reign of Elizabeth was inglorious for art, neither will that of James introduce us to names of note, or to works of lasting reputation. James, though an ungainly man and no very gracious monarch, had high qualities: he loved peace, he loved learning, he loved poetry—and he loved art a little. He encouraged first and then pensioned Mytens, a native of the Hague, whose reputation was such, that in the opinion of many it suffered but a slight eclipse on the appearance of Vandyke. This artist was at first employed in portraiture, but he afterwards copied in little many works of the great painters of Italy; nor did the originals, it is said, suffer much either in richness of colour or in beauty of sentiment, so skilful was his pencil.[1] The younger Oliver, too, made himself known about this period by numerous miniature portraits of the chief persons about court. This branch of art was encouraged by the prevailing fashion of wearing miniatures richly set in gold and diamonds; they were no longer concealed in boxes and cabinets of carved ebony, but displayed publicly around the neck, and employed to embellish the velvet dresses of the courtly and the high-

painted on canvas in oils, and another of Mary Queen of Scots. It was of this painter that Dr. Donne wrote:—

"An hand or eye
By Hilliard drawn is worth a historye
By a worse painter made."—Ed.

[1] Two foreign artists of reputation besides Daniel Mytens, namely, Cornelius Janssens, and Paul van Somer, worked in England during James's reign. Of English artists, the sculptor Nicholas Stone, was perhaps the best, but both the Olivers, Isaac and Peter, had a well-merited reputation. There are several miniatures by them in Her Majesty's collection at Windsor.—Ed.

born. This harmless vanity, while it encouraged art, exposed its works to the risk of continual accidents.[1]

The English at this period were rich and proud, and sensible of the fame which successful art brings to a nation. But there was a strong feeling entertained against them by foreign princes and foreign artists. They were denounced by the ancient church as incurable heretics; they were dreaded by sea and land; and it was reckoned dangerous to the soul, and not very safe to the body, to have interchange of civilities with men whom the saints had abandoned, and the Pope consigned to perdition. We were unable, therefore, either to allure over artists of talent, or to become the purchasers of many works of eminence. The general aversion which the mass of the community entertained towards the appearance of paintings in churches, began, however, sensibly to abate. Painted windows, altar-pieces, and works of a scriptural character, became common as the episcopal church grew strong. The king encouraged their reappearance; the dignitaries of the church sanctioned it; and the people, naturally fond of flashy colours and of pomp and show, made no opposition—though the Puritans called it a bowing of the knee to Baal, and a setting up of the image worship of the Lady of Babylon.

To the commencement of the reign of Charles the First all lovers of art and literature look with joy, and to the conclusion with sorrow. His spirit was lofty, his discernment great, his taste refined, and his nature generous. The purity of his court and the dignity of his manners were models for other nations. Into his palaces he introduced works of art of the first merit, and to his friendship men of talents and attainments. He filled his cabinets and his galleries with all the works of genius which he could procure in other countries or in his own. He encouraged merit of the first order. Inigo Jones was his architect, and Vandyke was his painter.

Of the contents of King Charles's galleries we have

[1] Cunningham omits to mention another English miniature painter of about this date, John Hoskins, whose works were very highly esteemed. He died in 1664.—Ed.

various accounts, but all agreeing that they contained many works of very high talent. Prince Henry, it is true, shares with his brother the merit of patronizing painting; and the Earl of Arundel has also the honour of being one of the foremost in forming the national taste, by a judicious assemblage of works of art. But the collection of the prince was small, for he died early; and that of the earl was chiefly, if not wholly, in sculpture;[1] while the gallery of the king was rich in paintings from the best masters. The merit, however, of commencing the royal collection is due to Henry the Eighth. It contained in his time one hundred and fifty pieces, including miniatures; and when we reflect on the deficiency of public taste, on the foreign wars which that king waged, his contest with the Church of Rome, and his domestic labours in courting, crowning, and uncrowning queens, we cannot but feel that he did much for art. His wardrobe accounts in the British Museum contain the list of his pictures; and though the artists' names are not mentioned, it is easy to trace that many are by Holbein, and pleasing to know that some of them are still in the Royal collection. This curious document confirms the accounts of the domestic splendour and public magnificence of Henry.

The influence of a king of true taste, like Charles, was soon visible in the nation. The foreign countries, who, to Elizabeth and James, had presented necklaces, and jewels, and splendid toys, now propitiated the English court with gifts of the fairest works of art. The states of Holland, instead of ivory puzzles, and cabinets formed after the ingenious pattern known to schoolboys by the name of the Walls of Troy, sent Tintorets and Titians. The King of Spain presented the Cain and Abel of John of Bologna, with Titian's Venus del Pardo; and other states courted Charles by gifts of a similar nature, though of less value. He employed skilful painters to copy what he could not purchase. Through the interposition of Rubens he obtained the Cartoons of Raphael, and by the negotiation of

[1] This is scarcely correct. We know that a large number of drawings were collected by the Earl of Arundel, many of which have found their way into the British Museum.—Ed.

Buckingham, the collection of the Duke of Mantua, containing eighty-two pictures, principally by Julio Romano, Titian, and Correggio. These and others rendered the great gallery of Whitehall a place of general attraction; there the king was oftener to be found than in his own apartments; all who loved and encouraged art went there; and so careful was Charles of those favourite works—that on the occasion of a public banquet, he caused a temporary place of accommodation to be constructed, rather than run any risk of soiling the paintings by the vapour of candles and torches.

This gallery contained in all four hundred and sixty pictures, by thirty-seven different artists. Of these, eleven were by Holbein, eleven by Correggio, sixteen by Julio Romano, ten by Mytens, seven by Parmegiano, nine by Raphael, seven by Rubens, three by Rembrandt, seven by Tintoret, twenty-eight by Titian, sixteen by Vandyke, four by Paul Veronese, and two by Leonardo da Vinci. All these were the private property of the king. The nobles, imitating the example of the throne, purchased largely whenever an opportunity offered. In 1625 Buckingham persuaded Rubens to sell him his own private collection, consisting of thirteen pictures by his own hand, nineteen by Titian, thirteen by Paul Veronese, seventeen by Tintoret, three by Leonardo da Vinci, and three by Raphael.

Charles considered this noble gallery but as the commencement of one much more valuable and magnificent, and he proceeded to collect materials with taste and enthusiasm. By a letter, written with his own hand, he invited, though in vain, Albano into England. Buckingham exhausted all his arts of persuasion to entice over Carlo Marratti; and Venet, a French painter of eminence, was solicited with the same bad success.[1] What money failed to purchase or patronage to secure, was obtained by chance. The Infanta of Spain sent, as her representative to the English Court, the accomplished Rubens. He was welcomed with great honour, and during the remission of

[1] I cannot find this name in the early annals of French art. Perhaps Simon Vouet is meant, a painter of great reputation at the court of Louis XIII.—Ed.

public duty was prevailed upon to embellish the Banqueting Room of Whitehall with the Apotheosis of King James—a work distinguished by such freedom and vigour of drawing, and such magnificence of colour, as excited general admiration. To the fame of this great painter nothing can now be added by praise, and as little can be taken from it by censure. The singular ease, vigour, and life which he imparted to all that he touched, the freedom and truth of his drawing, and the glowing and unlaboured excellence of his colouring, have been written upon and talked about in every nation; and the universal eulogy need not be repeated here.[1] Rubens remained one year in England, and gave by his works a visible impulse to art. Frigid imitation, and cold and mechanical covering, began to rise into boldness and varied richness; we had no longer forms without freedom, and faces without life. We have at present in Britain eighty-eight paintings by the hand of this great master.

Charles was equally fortunate in obtaining the aid of Vandyke; it came too, as many things of much value come, in a way that may be called accidental. The painter had heard of the honour which art received in England, and arrived in London in 1632, in the thirty-fourth year of his age. He remained a short time quite unnoticed, and retired to the Continent in disgust. The king, then learning what a treasure he had lost, employed Sir Kenelm Digby to soothe him and bring him back; and in this he was successful. Vandyke returned, was admitted into the ranks of the royal painters, and as he wrought with equal rapidity and success, soon gave such evidence of his abilities as delighted the monarch, and consequently captivated the whole court. The queen, then young and lovely, sat to him, and so did her sons; her example was followed by many lords and ladies of the court, and also by the king,

[1] From fame thus established the sharp censure with which Fuseli visits the allegories of the school of Rubens can subtract little. There is much bitterness, but there is also not a little of truth in the remarks. "Those allegorical histories are empty representations of themselves, the supporters of nothing but clumsy forms and clumsier conceits; they can only be considered as splendid improprieties, as the substitute for wants which no colour can palliate and no tints supply."

who bestowed a knighthood and a pension of two hundred a-year upon the fortunate artist. No portrait painter indeed ever merited royal favour more.

Vandyke had studied under Rubens—"Fame," says Walpole, "attributes to his master an envy of which his liberal nature was, I believe, incapable, and makes him advise Vandyke to apply himself chiefly to portraits. If Rubens gave the advice in question, he gave it with reason, not maliciously. Vandyke had a peculiar genius for portraits; his draperies are finished with a minuteness of truth not demanded in historic compositions; besides, his invention was cold and tame; nor does he any where seem to have had much idea of the passions and their expression —portraits require none." This seems but a cold acknowledgment of the talents of this great artist, whose portraits are now, and are likely to remain, the wonder of all nations. Of those works, this island alone possesses more than two hundred. He has been equalled in freedom by Reynolds, and surpassed in the fascination of female loveliness by Lawrence, but no one has yet equalled him in manly dignity; in the rare and important gift of endowing his heads with power to think and act. With all his vigour, he has no violent attitudes, no startling postures; all is natural and graceful. Whatever his figures do, they do easily; there is no straining. Man in his noblest form and attitudes was ever present to his fancy; he strikes his subjects clearly and cleverly out; he disdains to retire into the darkness of backgrounds, or to float away the body into a cloud or a vapour. All his men are of robust intellect, for he is a painter of mind more than of velvet or silk; yet he throws a cloak over a cavalier with a grace which few have attained. His ladies are inferior to his men; they seldom equal the fresh innocent loveliness of nature. He remained long in this country; and to his pencil we owe many portraits of the eminent persons who embellished or embroiled the most unfortunate of English reigns.

"Vandyke's pictures," observes Barry, "are evidently painted at once, with sometimes a little retouching, and they are not less remarkable for the truth, beauty, and freshness of the tints, than for the masterly manner of their handling or execution." Of the St. Sebastian and

Susanna by the same artist, in the Dusseldorf gallery, Reynolds remarks, "they were done when he was very young; he never afterwards had so brilliant a manner of colouring; it kills every thing near it. Behind are figures on horseback, touched with great spirit. This is Vandyke's first manner, when he imitated Rubens and Titian, which supposes the sun in the room; in his pictures afterwards he represented common daylight."

The public mind during this period was laden and heaving with another leaven; and that fierce spirit was visibly at work which turned our churches into stables, and levelled the ancient fabric of our monarchy with the dust. Men of talent turned their attention to more important matters than those of art; and I cannot help feeling surprised that a time teeming with the elements of strife and commotion should have produced an artist of such merit as George Jamesone. Of this painter, distinguished by the name of the Scottish Vandyke, less is known than I could wish. He was the son of an architect, and was born at Aberdeen in the year 1586. He went abroad; studied under Rubens in the company of Vandyke; returned to Scotland in 1628; and commenced his professional career at Edinburgh. His earliest works are chiefly painted on panel; he afterwards used fine linen cloth. Having made some successful attempts in landscape and history he relinquished them for portraiture—a branch of the art which this island has never failed to patronize. He acquired much fame in his day, and was considered after Vandyke the ablest of the scholars of Rubens. His excellence consists in softness and delicacy, and in a manner broad and transparent. His colouring is beautiful; his shades not changed, but helped by varnish; and there is very little appearance of the pencil.

When Charles visited Scotland in 1633, he sat for his portrait to Jamesone, and rewarded him with a diamond ring from his own finger. Many of his portraits are still to be found in the houses of the Scottish nobility and gentry. So well had he caught the manner and spirit of Vandyke, that several of his heads have been imputed to his more famous contemporary. I must not omit to mention that some of his pictures are in the college of his

native place, and that "The Sybils," a work of merit, was copied, according to tradition, from two of the beauties of Aberdeen.

The prices which he received for his pictures seem small, even in the swelling numbers of the Scottish currency. In the genealogy of the House of Breadalbane occurs the following singular memorandum—it is dated 1635:—"Sir Colin Campbell, eighth laird of Glenorchy, gave unto George Jamesone, painter in Edinburgh, for Robert and David Bruces, kings of Scotland, and Charles the First, king of Great Britain, and his majesty's queen, and for nine more of the queens of Scotland, their portraits which are in the hall of Balloch (now Taymouth), the sum of two hundred and threescore pounds. Moreover the said Sir Colin gave to the said George Jamesone for the knight of Lochore's lady, and the first countess of Argyle, and six of the ladies of Glenorchy, their portraits, and the said Sir Colin his own portrait, which are set up in the chamber of Deas at Balloch, one hundred and fourscore pounds."

In spite of all this apparent penury of price, Jamesone died rich. His works still maintain their original reputation; and he goes down as the first native of this island who excelled in works of art as large as life.[1]

[1] It is strange that Cunningham, who accords elsewhere a separate biography to Jamesone, should have omitted altogether to notice his contemporary, William Dobson, our first English painter of portrait beyond miniature size, and who also was the first to attempt history. William Dobson was born in London in 1610. He was apprenticed in early life to Sir Robert Peake, a painter and picture dealer of small note, under whose instruction he learnt to copy the works of Vandyke and other masters. One of these copies drew the attention of Vandyke, who generously helped the young painter and introduced him to Charles the First, who at Vandyke's death made him his Serjeant painter and Groom of the Privy Chamber. But the evil times in which he lived, and his own dissipated life, proved fatal to any great achievement of his art. At the outbreak of the civil war we find him in prison for debt, and soon afterwards dying, at the age of thirty-six, in St. Martin's Lane, London. His portraits, many of which have appeared at the National Portrait Exhibition, and some recently at the "Old Masters," Burlington House, have undoubted merit, though they are somewhat stiff and hard in style. There is an excellent one of himself and his wife at Hampton Court, a portrait of Cleveland the poet in the Ellesmere collection, and a good group of family portraits at Devonshire House. He has left besides his

An anecdote is related of Charles, which it would be wrong to omit. The king wished to employ Bernini the sculptor, and tried in vain to allure him into England. Not succeeding in this, and still desirous to have one of his works, he employed Vandyke to draw those inimitable profiles and full face now in the royal gallery, to enable the sculptor to make his majesty's bust. Bernini surveyed these materials with an anxious eye, and exclaimed, "Something evil will befall this man; he carries misfortune on his face." Tradition has added, in the same spirit, that a hawk pursued a dove into the sculptor's study, and, rending its victim in the air, sprinkled with its blood the finished bust of King Charles. I have also heard it asserted that stains of blood were still visible on the marble when it was lost in the fire which consumed Whitehall.

It would be instructive to ascertain how far art had resumed its old sway in our churches under the friendly governments of James and Charles—to learn how many windows were refilled with painted glass, and how many altar-pieces, representing Scripture story, had reappeared —when the fierce Puritans vanquished the chivalry of Charles, and purged anew the sanctuary, to the fullest sense of the proclamations of Henry, Edward, and Elizabeth. This cannot now be known.

The fierce war which ensued, and the strange desolation which fell on rank, station, and all established things, was sure to make art a victim. The "pulpit, drum ecclesiastic," assailed the beloved paintings of the monarch, as things vain, frivolous, and sinful; and stigmatized their admirers and abettors as persons possessed with an unclean spirit. The fury of the parliament fell upon the royal galleries. The presence of art in the land was accounted superfluous; to despise whatever increased external dignity was meritorious; and to lop and prune the blossomed boughs from the stately tree of civil and religious government, was not only deemed a merit, but a duty. To strip off, therefore, the exterior magnificence of the old government, was the

portraits a few historical pictures, in particular "The Beheading of St. John the Baptist," at Wilton House.—ED.

first act of the new; and they proceeded to sell by common auction the hereditary furniture of the palaces, the heirlooms of the monarchy, and the collection of paintings made under the auspices of their kings. A list of these works of art was made out, imaginary prices attached to each, and the public purpose named—the war in the north and in Ireland—to which the money arising from the sale should be applied. The Puritans affected to despise those productions, because they wished to insult the king's memory; and they desired to sell them, because they had need of the money. But not finding this a sufficient justification, they pretended a fanatic hatred to certain classes of works, and ordered these to be burned—as Henry and Elizabeth had done before. The following is transcribed from the Journals of the House of Commons, of 23rd July, 1645. "Ordered, that all such pictures and statues there (York House), as are without any superstition, shall be forthwith sold for the benefit of Ireland and the north. Ordered, that all such pictures there, as have the representation of the Virgin Mary upon them, shall be forthwith burnt. Ordered, that all such pictures there, as have the representation of the second person in the Trinity upon them, shall be forthwith burnt." "This was a worthy contrast," says Walpole, "to Archbishop Laud, who made a star-chamber business of a man who broke some painted glass in the cathedral at Salisbury. The cause of liberty was then, and is always, the only cause that can excuse a civil war; yet if Laud had not doated on trifles, and the Presbyterians been squeamish about them, I question whether the nobler motives would have had sufficient influence to save us from arbitrary power. They are the slightest objects which make the deepest impression on the people. They seldom fight for the liberty of doing what they have a right to do, but because they are prohibited or enjoined some folly that they have, or have not, a mind to do."

The wild order for the dispersion and destruction of the royal collections was not immediately, nor indeed ever was fully, obeyed. The sales lingered for six or eight years; they were retarded by the unsettled state of the republican government, and by the intrigues of Cromwell. It appears that even the order for the destruction of paintings re-

presenting the Virgin and the Saviour was very imperfectly fulfilled. The Puritans, having put them down by a vote as superstitious, allowed not a few of them to escape the flames, and pass silently into the possession of private purchasers whom they were unwilling to disoblige.

They stigmatized art; silenced dramatic actors; shut up the playhouses; and, having conquered and dispersed all their enemies, had full leisure to dispute and quarrel among themselves;—and they did not neglect the opportunity. As they were debating about the booty, a wily and daring spirit interposed, and seized at one grasp the fruits of all their deliberations, prayers, mortifications, plots, and battles. Cromwell, with all his talents, had little feeling for the higher excellency of art. His chief instruction to the painter of his portrait was to remember the warts and moles. He was not insensible, however, that lustre is proper to a court; and, as soon as he became possessed of absolute power, put an end to all sales of the royal furniture and paintings.[1] For many fine works this order came too late; they had been dispersed beyond recall. Some of the best were bought by the King of Spain, and arrived at Madrid at the same time with the ambassadors of the exiled King—a circumstance which puzzled sorely the Spanish etiquette. Many were sold to persons connected with the old court, many to mere picture-dealers, and some to the more sensible and spirited of the Puritans. The celebrated Colonel Hutchinson was an extensive purchaser; Oliver Cromwell's name appears early in the list of buyers. Some had the misfortune to purchase just when the Lord General was about to assume sovereign power, and their bargains were declared void! One of those disappointed dealers had the audacity to petition Charles the Second for a restitution of his lot of pictures—the result is not known. Into a dozen galleries Charles had collected upwards of twelve hundred works of art; most of these were dispersed by public sale during the years from 1645 to 1652, and they produced to the

[1] It must not be forgotten that it is to Cromwell we owe the preservation of the Raphael Cartoons for the nation. They were valued by the Commissioners at £300 but Cromwell prevented them being sold. Far

republicans thirty-eight thousand pounds.[1] Another fate befell the gallery of the Duke of Buckingham. The pictures were sold privately, to support the second duke during the misery of exile, and, what is worse, they were chiefly purchased by foreigners.

There is no doubt, after all, that very many of the royal pictures remained in England. At the Restoration, when Pepys visited the royal gallery, he declares that he missed few of his old favourites; and we see by the catalogue of James the Second, that the crown was in his time repossessed of many of its ancient paintings. But the unfortunate fire at Whitehall completed what the Puritans did imperfectly, and destroyed a vast number of noble works.

Of the painters who appeared during the Commonwealth little need be said.[2] Painting and sculpture are of slow growth, and seldom thrive amidst wars and convulsions.

less creditable was the conduct of Charles II., who actually sold them to Barillon, the minister of Louis XIV., the purchase being all but concluded, when they were again saved to England, this time by the intervention of Lord Danby, who entreated Charles not to part with such inestimable treasures. The Puritans, indeed, though doubtless they have much to answer for, scarcely deserve the sweeping condemnation that is here bestowed upon them. More works of art perished through ignorance and neglect under the Restoration and during the succeeding reigns than were destroyed by their fanaticism. But it is customary to attribute every sin of this kind to these uncompromising patriots.—Ed.

[1] I shall transcribe the prices of some of the most celebrated pictures, more for the sake of amusing the reader, than with the hope of instructing purchasers. The Cartoons of Raphael, £300; the Royal Family, £150; King Charles on horseback, £200; the Triumphs of Julius Cæsar, £1,000; the Twelve Cæsars of Titian, £1,200; the Muses, by Tintoret, £100; the Nativity, by Julio Romano, £500; Sleeping Venus, by Correggio, £1,000; the Venus del Pardo, by Titian, £600; Venus attired by the Graces, by Guido, £200; a little Madonna and Christ, by Raphael, £800; St. George, by Raphael, £150; our Lady, Christ, and others, by Palma, £200; Erasmus and Frobinius, by Holbein, £200; Satyr Flayed, by Correggio, £1,000; Mercury teaching Cupid to read in the presence of Venus, by Correggio, £800; the head of King Charles, a bust by Bernini, £800; and Christ washing the feet of his Disciples, £300. This list contains, as the reader will observe, several pictures condemned to the flames as superstitious. We have no means of knowing into whose hands the whole of those works went. The St. George was purchased by France.

[2] Chief of these was Robert Walker, Cromwell's portrait painter, who died about 1660. There were several interesting portraits by him of the Cromwell Family at the first Portrait Exhibition, including one of Robert

Men have not peace of mind nor leisure during rebellions and treasons to cultivate what is elegant; and when a man's head is not safe on his shoulders, it is not likely that he will spend his time sitting for his likeness. James the Second indeed acted otherwise. He was sitting for his portrait, as a present to Pepys, when word was brought to him of the landing of the Prince of Orange. The artist was confounded, and laid down his brush. "Go on, Kneller," said the king, betraying no outward emotion—"go on, and finish your work; I wish not to disappoint my friend Pepys."

For the character of those times and their influence on art, I transcribe, without entirely approving, the words of Walpole. "The arts were in a manner expelled with the royal family from Britain. The magnificence the people have envied they grow to detest; and, mistaking consequences for causes, the first objects of their fury are the palaces of their masters. If religion is thrown into the quarrel, the most innocent are catalogued with sins. This was the case in the contest between Charles and his parliament. As he had blended affection to the sciences with a lust of power, nonsense and ignorance were adopted into the liberties of the subject. Painting became idolatry; monuments were deemed carnal pride, and a venerable cathedral seemed equally contradictory to Magna Charta and the Bible. Learning and wit were construed to be as heathen. What the fury of Henry the Eighth had spared, was condemned by the Puritans. Ruin was their harvest, and they gleaned after the Reformers. Had they countenanced any of the softer arts, what would those arts have represented? How picturesque was the figure of an Anabaptist? But sectaries have no ostensible enjoyments: their pleasures are private, comfortable, and gross. The arts that civilize society are not calculated for men who rise on the ruins of established order."

The noble poetry of Milton, the fine taste and lofty feelings of Colonel Hutchinson, as well as the actions and speeches of many of the great worthies who warred on the side of civil and religious freedom, furnish a sufficient answer

Cromwell, the father of the Protector. Walker's best known portrait of Oliver Cromwell is at Warwick Castle.—Ed.

to the exclusive claim, which Walpole sets up for the episcopal church, to all that is witty, and learned, and elegant.

Under the influence of the Restored King the character of the nation seemed changed as if by sudden enchantment—the people leapt from dreary prayers and interminable sermons to dice, and dance, and debauch. For the stately and chivalrous court of Charles the First—for the martial austerity of Cromwell and his companions, we had profligates, gamblers, paid informers, hired stabbers, and titled strumpets; while over the whole scene of courtly iniquity presided a prince pensioned by the enemies of his country—the most witty and polished of profligates.

The impurities of the court infected literature: it took away the natural grace of innocence and simplicity from our youth; and art also was renewed in a spirit corresponding with the unwholesome state of society. It was no longer grave and devout, as under the first Charles. It was dedicated to the task of recording the features of lordly rakes and courtly wantons. Loose attire and looser looks were demanded now. No one was so ready to comply as Sir Peter Lely, and it must be confessed that no other artist could have brought such skill and talent to the task.

When Cromwell sat to Lely, he said, "I desire you will use all your skill to paint my picture truly like me, and not flatter me at all; but remark all those roughnesses, pimples, warts, and everything as you see me; otherwise I never will pay one farthing for it." When the softer customers of Charles's palace sat to the same painter, they laid his talents under no such restrictions. He seemed to consider himself chief limner at the court of Paphos. No one knew better than he how to paint

"The sleepy eye that spoke the melting soul;"

to imitate the fascinating undulations of female bosoms, or give voluptuous glow and solid softness to youthful flesh and blood. The beauties of Windsor, as they are called, kindled up old Pepys, who says in his Memoirs, that he called at Mr. Lely's, who was "a mighty proud man and full of state," where he saw the Duchess of Cleveland "sitting in a chair, dressed in white satin;" also Lady Castlemaine, "*a most blessed picture*, of which he was

resolved to have a copy." The lapse of a century and a half has purified the air round those gay and merry madams, and we can look on Lady Castlemaine and her companions as calmly as on the Venus de Medicis. "The bugle eyeball and the cheek of cream" have done with their magic now.

Lely, however, did not wholly dedicate his pencil to the condescending beauties of Charles's court: he has preserved the features of statesmen who contrived to walk upright even in those slippery times: nor did he neglect the men of genius who flourished in his day. He painted Clarendon, Cowley, Butler, Selden, and Otway. He formed a gallery of the works of Vandyke and other eminent artists, which was sold at his death for twenty-six thousand pounds. He maintained the state of a gentleman, and preserved the dignity due to art in his intercourse with the court. Of the numerous works which he painted—for he was a diligent and laborious man—upwards of seventy are still in the island,—portraits of ladies of rank or note, and of men of birth or genius.

To the coming of Kneller some writers have attributed the death of Lely. But he died suddenly; and jealousy and mortification are more slow in their operations. The new artist was indeed a man of talent, but there was nothing of that high order about him which could be supposed capable of sickening the soul, or shortening the life of the other. The works of Kneller are numerous: they are almost exclusively portraits; and over whatever he produced he threw an air of freedom and a hue of nature not unworthy of Vandyke. All the sovereigns of his time, all the noblemen of the court, all the men of genius in the kingdom, and almost all the ladies of rank or of beauty in England, sat for their portraits. When he painted the head of Louis the Fourteenth, the king asked him what mark of his esteem would be most agreeable to him: the painter answered modestly and genteelly that he should feel honoured if his Majesty would bestow a quarter of an hour upon him, that he might execute a drawing of his face for himself. It was granted. He painted Dryden in his own hair, in plain drapery, holding a laurel, and made him a present of the work. The poet repaid this by an

epistle containing encomiums such as few painters deserve:—

> "Such are thy pictures, Kneller! such thy skill,
> That nature seems obedient to thy will,
> Comes out and meets thy pencil in the draught,
> Lives there, and wants but words to speak the thought."

To the incense of Dryden was added that of Pope, Addison, Prior, Tickell, and Steele. No wonder the artist was vain.

But the vanity of Kneller was redeemed by his naïveté and rendered pleasant by his wit. "Dost thou think, man," said he to his tailor, who proposed his son for a pupil, "dost thou think, man, I can make thy son a painter? No! God Almighty only makes painters." His wit, however, was that of one who had caught the spirit of Charles the Second's wicked court. He once overheard a low fellow cursing himself. "God damn you!' indeed!" exclaimed the artist in wonder; "God may damn the Duke of Marlborough, and perhaps Sir Godfrey Kneller; but do you think he will take the trouble of damning such a scoundrel as you?" The servants of his neighbour, Dr. Radcliffe, abused the liberty of a private entrance to the painter's garden, and plucked his flowers. Kneller sent word that he must shut the door up. "Tell him," the doctor peevishly replied, "that he may do anything with it but paint it." "Never mind what he says," retorted Sir Godfrey, "I can take anything from him—but physic."

Kneller was one day conversing about his art, when he gave the following neat reasons for preferring portraiture. "Painters of history," said he, "make the dead live, and do not begin to live themselves till they are dead. I paint the living, and they make me live!" In a conversation concerning the legitimacy of the unfortunate son of James the Second, some doubts having been expressed by an Oxford doctor, he exclaimed with much warmth, "His father and mother have sat to me about thirty-six times a-piece, and I know every line and bit of their faces. Mein Gott! I could paint King James *now* by memory. I say the child is so like both, that there is not a feature in his face but what belongs either to father or to mother; this I am sure of, and cannot be mistaken: nay, the nails of his fingers are his mother's, the queen that was. Doctor,—

you may be out in your letters, but I cannot be out in my lines."

To four distinguished foreign artists, then, we are indebted for portraits of the most eminent persons who appeared in England during a long course of years. The truth, force, and elegance of many of their works are yet unsurpassed. I am aware that there is a certain air of stiffness in the portraits of Holbein, that several of Vandyke's are unequal to his talents, that Lely is loose and many of his pictures unlike, and that Kneller exhibits much sameness and very little imagination; yet, with all these drawbacks, each has left works which will never be neglected. The Olivers,[1] and James Jamesone, and Cooper, it is true, were native artists; but miniature-painters and mere imitators of Vandyke can have little right to be classed among masters.[2]

A certain kind of painting obtained great reputation in this island during the reigns of the Stuarts, which may be called the architectural. It professed to be the handmaid of

[1] Concerning some of the portraits of the younger Oliver, Vertue relates the following characteristic story:—"After the Restoration, Charles made many inquiries about the miniatures of Oliver which had been in his father's gallery, and expressed a great desire to obtain them. He could hear no account of them. At last he was told by one Rogers, of Isleworth, that both father and son were dead, but that the son's widow was living at Isleworth, and had many of their works. The king went privately and unknown with Rogers to see them. The widow showed several finished and unfinished, with many of which the king being pleased, asked if she would sell them. She replied she had a mind the king should see them first, and, if he did not purchase them, she would think of disposing of them. The king discovered himself, on which she produced some more pictures which she seldom showed. The king desired her to set her price: she said she did not care to make a price with his majesty, she would leave it to him; but promised to look over her husband's books, and let his majesty know what prices his father, the late king, had paid. The king took away what he liked, and sent Rogers to Mrs. Oliver with the option of a thousand pounds, or an annuity of three hundred a-year for her life. She chose the latter. Some years afterwards it happened that the king's mistresses had begged all or most of these pictures: Mrs. Oliver said, on hearing it, that if she had thought the king would have given them to such strumpets, he never should have had them. This reached the court; her pension was stopped, and she never received it afterwards."

[2] Among the forgotten painters of this time may be mentioned Robert Streater (1624—1680), who enjoyed a great reputation in his day. Pepys

architecture; when the mason, and carpenter, and plasterer, had done their work, its professors made their appearance, and covered walls and ceilings with mobs of the old divinities—nymphs who represented cities—crowned beldams for nations—and figures, ready ticketed and labelled, answering to the names of virtues. The national love of subjecting all works to a measure-and-value price, which had been disused while art followed nature and dealt in sentiment, was again revived, that these cold mechanical productions might be paid for in the spirit which conceived them.

The chief apostles of this dark faith were two foreigners and one Englishman—Verrio, La Guerre, and Sir James Thornhill. Rubens, indeed, and others, had deviated from nature into this desert track—only to return again to human feelings with a heartier relish. But Thornhill and his companions never deviated into nature. The shepherdesses of Sir Peter Lely were loose in their attire, loose in their looks, and trailed their embroidered robes among the thorns and brambles of their pastoral scenes, in a way which made the staid dames of the Puritans blush and look aside. But the mystic nymphs of Thornhill or La Guerre, though evidently spreading out all their beauties and making the most of their charms, could never move the nerves of a Stoic. It is in vain that a goddess tumbles naked through a whole quarter of the sky. It is astonishing how much and how long these works were admired, and with what ardour men of education and talent praised them.[1]

Thornhill enjoys all the advantage of the praise of Pilkington, and the approbation of Lord Orford. "His genius," says the former, "was well adapted to historical and allegorical compositions. He possessed a fertile and fine invention,

speaks of him as "the great history painter," and says that many think his pictures in the theatre at Oxford better than those of Rubens at Whitehall; "but," adds the sagacious Pepys, "I do not so fully think so; but they will certainly be very noble, and I am mightily pleased to see the man and his work, which is very famous." Alas! for his fame. Cunningham does not even mention him!—Ed.

[1] It is admitted even by Walpole "that no reign since the arts have been in any estimation produced fewer works that will deserve the attention of posterity than that of George I."—Ed.

and sketched his thoughts with great ease, freedom, and spirit. He was so eminent in many parts of his profession, that he must for ever be ranked among the first painters of his time." . . . "Sir James Thornhill," says Walpole, "a man of much note in his time, who succeeded Verrio, and was the rival of La Guerre in the decorations of our palaces and public buildings, was born at Weymouth, in Dorsetshire; was knighted by George the First, and was elected to represent his native town in parliament. His chief works were the dome of St. Paul's; an apartment at Hampton Court; the altar-piece of the chapel of All Souls, at Oxford; another for Weymouth, of which he made them a present; the hall at Blenheim; the chapel at Lord Orford's at Whimpole, in Cambridgeshire; the saloon and other things for Mr. Styles, at More Park, Hertfordshire; and the great hall of Greenwich Hospital. Yet, high as his reputation was, and laborious as his works were, he was far from being generously rewarded for some of them, and for others he found it difficult to obtain the stipulated prices. His demands were contested at Greenwich, and though La Fosse received £2,000 for his works at Montague House, and was allowed £500 for his diet besides, Sir James could obtain but forty shillings a square yard for the cupola of St. Paul's, and I think no more for Greenwich.

I now approach the period when native painters of genius and fame make their appearance—men whose works merit minute examination, and whose lives contain matters of lasting interest. It is plain that up to this time no British artist had arisen capable of leading the way in painting,—no one who possessed at once talent for original composition, and skill to render his conceptions permanent. The heart of the country had as yet been but little moved by this art;—and all the splendid colouring, and academic forms, the fixed and approved attitudes and long-established graces, went for nothing, when a man appeared who sought lasting fame—and found it—in moral sentiment, nervous satire, sarcastic humour, and actual English life.

WILLIAM HOGARTH.

WILLIAM HOGARTH was born in the parish of St. Bartholomew the Great, London, on the 10th of December, 1697.[1] That he was baptized on the 28th of the same month, we have the authority of his own manuscripts—the parish registers have been examined for confirmation with fruitless solicitude. He was a descendant of the family of Hogard, Hogart, or Hogarth, of Kirkby-Thore, in the county of Westmoreland;[2] his father being the youngest of three brothers—the eldest of whom lived and died in the condition of yeoman, on a small hereditary freehold in the vale of Bampton. The second held

[1] The precise locality of his birth was Ship Court, Old Bailey, a few doors from Ludgate Hill. The house, with several others, was pulled down in 1862, to make room for Messrs. Dickinson's paper warehouse. —Ed.

[2] Nichols says, in his earlier years he wrote himself Hogart or Hogard, but in this he is certainly incorrect. His father to his books and his letters added Richard Hogarth, and there is no reason to believe that the son, even for a time, refused to adopt an improvement so graceful. That the name, in London pronunciation, would have the concluding *th* hardened into *t*, there can be little doubt; such is the fate of all northern names with similar terminations. Thus in conversation he was called Hogart, which the following lines, from Swift's "Legion Club," sufficiently prove:—

> "How I want thee, humourous Hogart!
> Thou, I hear, a pleasant rogue art!
> Were but you and I acquainted,
> Every monster should be painted;
> You should try your graving tools
> On this odious group of fools;
> Draw the beasts as I describe them
> From their features while I gibe them.
> Draw them like, for I assure-a
> You'll need no caricatura;
> Draw them so that we may trace
> All the soul in every face."

the plough at Troutbeck, in the same district; and Richard, the youngest, having been educated at the school of St. Bees, carried thence his learning and his health to the great market of the metropolis.

For his small success in London we have the testimony of his son. He arrived, we know not at what period; obtained employment as a corrector of the press; married a woman whose name or kindred no one has mentioned;[1] kept—it is not known how long—a school in Ship Court, Old Bailey; and having sought in vain for the distinction of an author and the patronage of the powerful, sunk under disappointed hope and incessant labour about the year 1721—leaving one son, WILLIAM, and two daughters, whose names were Ann and Mary.

When the fame of William Hogarth was such as rendered some account of his kindred a matter of public curiosity, it was discovered that his uncle, who lived at Troutbeck, was a rustic poet and satirist, whose rude and witty productions (in the opinion of Adam Walker, the natural philosopher) reformed the manners of the people as much, at least, as the sermons of the clergyman; and that he had written a singular and humorous dramatic poem on the destruction of Troy, which was acted with applause in the open air, among the pastoral hills, by the peasants of Westmoreland. "The wooden horse"—says the philosopher, "Hector dragged by the heels—the fury of Diomed—the flight of Eneas—and the burning of the city, were all represented. I remember not what fairies had to do in all this; but—as I happened to be about three feet high at the time—I personated one of those tiny beings. The stage was a fabric of boards placed about six feet high, on strong posts; the green-room was partitioned off with the same materials, its ceiling was the canopy of heaven, and the boxes, pit, and galleries, were laid out into one by the great Author of Nature, for they were the green slope of a fine hill." When Nichols col-

[1] Of Mrs. Hogarth, the mother of the painter, it is stated in the "Gentleman's Magazine" for June 11, 1735, that she "died of a fright occasioned by the fire on the 9th instant." For an account of this fire see "Gentleman's Magazine," vol. v. p. 330.

lected his anecdotes of Hogarth,[1] he was desirous of tasting the spirit of the rustic dramatist of Westmoreland; and many ballads and satires were gathered and laid before him. George Steevens—a fellow-labourer in the collection—made the following estimate of their merits—"These poems are every way contemptible. Want of grammar, metre, sense, and decency, are their invariable characteristics." But a critic who recognized only humour and burlesque in the works of the immortal nephew, might see nothing but the defects of the Bard of Troutbeck; the man who wrote to excite the laughter of a rustic audience, was not likely to be solicitous about grammar, or fastidious about delicacy of phrase.

Respecting his father also inquiries were made; but they were left unanswered till the death of the painter, when the following particulars were found among his memoranda. Richard Hogarth wrote a volume of about four hundred pages as an addition to Littleton's Latin Dictionary, and obtained testimonials to its usefulness and merit "from some of the greatest scholars in England, Scotland, and Ireland." He submitted it to a bookseller with the intention of printing it, but delays took place, and the work was finally withdrawn and laid aside. He then published "Grammar Disputations; or an Examination of the Eight Parts of Speech, by way of Question and Answer, English and Latin, whereby Children in a very little time will learn not only the knowledge of Grammar, but likewise to speak and write Latin, as I have found by good experience." These are his own words; the book was printed in 1712—of his success let his son speak. "I saw the difficulties," says William, "under which my father laboured; the many inconveniences he endured from his

[1] This curious work was written by two able men, John Nichols and George Steevens; but the former had the sole reputation of the authorship from 1785 till 1810, when in the second edition the different contributions were distinguished. By following the first edition, I have done unintentional wrong to the memory of Nichols. The passages most injurious to Hogarth were written, it appears, by Steevens, who seems to have taken pleasure in mingling his own gall with the milk of his coadjutor's narrative. In this edition [2nd] I have made all the reparation I can for such a very natural mistake.

dependence, living chiefly on his pen; and the cruel treatment he met with from booksellers and printers. I had before my eyes the precarious situation of men of classical education; it was, therefore, conformable to my own wishes that I was taken from school, and served a long apprenticeship to a silver-plate engraver." Walpole is, therefore, mistaken when he says that Hogarth was the son of a low tradesman.

Of the extent of his education we have no account; but, as his father was an enthusiastic scholar, we have no reason to suppose that it was neglected. He has been accused of ignorance; and friends and enemies united in upbraiding him with misspelling his native language. But when knowledge was required he showed no deficiency; some of his memorandums and remarks are well and cleverly written; and much of the misspelling on his plates is evidently intentional, and for the sake of effect. Correct spelling, however, was not then common, and men of literary attainments must share in the reproach. Of his age, when he was apprenticed to Ellis Gamble, an eminent silversmith in Cranbourne Street, there is no notice;[1] he was old enough to observe that the classical knowledge of his father was no protection against sorrow and want. His own reflecting mind influenced him in the choice of a business which brought daily bread, in preference to the precarious honours of scholarship. There were other reasons, which are best related in his own words:—

"As I had naturally a good eye and fondness for drawing, *shows* of all sorts gave me uncommon pleasure when young, and mimickry, common to all children, was remarkable in me. An early access to a neighbouring painter drew my attention from play; and I was, at every possible opportunity, employed in making drawings. I picked up an acquaintance of the same turn, and soon learnt to draw the alphabet with great correctness. My exercises when at school were more remarkable for the ornaments which

[1] It is usually supposed that his apprenticeship ended in 1718, so that we may conclude that it began about the year 1711. He had set up for himself in business in Cranbourne Alley as early as 1720, and his first known print is said by Wornum to have been his own shop bill.—Ed.

adorned them, than for the exercise itself. In the former, I soon found that blockheads, with better memories, would soon surpass me: but for the latter I was particularly distinguished."

Nothing better could be done with a boy who thus adorned his school exercises, than to make him an artist. But probationary study in painting, or in sculpture, provides neither food nor clothes, and, as Hogarth required both, he was placed in a situation which procured them. The choice he made was a fortunate one. Drawing and engraving made part of his profession; and even shields, crests, supporters, coronets, and ciphers, afforded to his young hand the means of gaining facility and precision.[1] Before his apprenticeship expired, however, he had gone far beyond these things; he had conceived a new and happy style of art—rough-hewn his own notions of excellence, and taken a satiric sitting or two from public vice and folly.

"I soon found," he observes, "this business in every respect too limited. The paintings of St. Paul's and Greenwich Hospital, which were at that time going on, ran in my head, and I determined that silver-plate engraving should be followed no longer than necessity obliged me to it. Engraving on copper was at twenty years of age my utmost ambition. To attain this it was necessary that I should learn to draw objects something like nature, instead of the monsters of heraldry, and the common methods of study were much too tedious for one who loved his pleasure and came so late to it; for the time necessary to learn in the usual mode would leave me none to spare for the ordinary enjoyments of life. This led me to considering whether a shorter road than that usually travelled was not to be found. The early part of my life had been employed

[1] The shop card that he engraved for his master, Ellis Gamble, is still extant, and is reproduced in G. A. Sala's "William Hogarth, Painter, Engraver, and Philosopher." On it is represented a winged figure bearing a branch, with an inscription (both in French and English) underneath, stating that—"*Ellis Gamble, Goldsmith, at the Golden Angel, in Cranbourne Street, Leicester Fields, makes, buys, and sells all sorts of plate, rings, and jewells, etc.*"—ED.

in a business rather detrimental than advantageous to those branches of the art which I wished to pursue, and have since professed. I had learned by practice to copy with tolerable correctness in the ordinary way, but it occurred to me that there were many disadvantages attending this method of study, as having faulty originals, &c.; and, even when the pictures or prints to be imitated were by the best masters, it was little more than pouring water out of one vessel into another."

Nichols asserts that the skill and assiduity of Hogarth were, during his term of servitude, of singular assistance to his family and to his master. He was, I doubt not, a dutiful son, and on the whole a faithful servant; but it is seldom that the labours of an apprentice increase a master's fortune. He has the general notion of his business to acquire, his hand to discipline, and his taste to correct; and these things with the cleverest must be the work of time. Hogarth, to be sure, was no common apprentice; yet his account of his own feelings and aspirations yields no support to the supposition of Nichols. He found his profession too limited; he grew weary of the monotonous monsters of heraldry; he loved his pleasure; and loved too to think upon the dignity of art and its honours. That a youth so aspiring and ardent always employed his hands for his master's advantage, appears doubtful. When released from his indenture, we find him skilful as an engraver, a good draughtsman, with considerable knowledge in colouring. During the acquisition of much of this knowledge, I am afraid that he was not of "singular assistance" to Ellis Gamble. He served his time without any complaint—nor have I heard of any commendation.[1]

Of those early days I find this brief notice in Smith's "Life of Nollekens," the sculptor. "I have several times heard Mr. Nollekens observe, that he had frequently seen Hogarth, when a young man, saunter round Leicester Fields

[1] A magnificent melon-shaped teakettle, engraved with heads in medallion and scrolls by Hogarth, on a circular stand, finely chased with masks, scrolls, and medallions, and dated 1722, was sold at Lord Willoughby de Eresby's sale in 1869. It was from Lord Tenterden's collection.—A. C.

with his master's sickly child hanging its head over his shoulder.' It is more amusing to read such a book than safe to quote it. Hogarth had ceased to have a master for seventeen years, was married to Jane Thornhill, kept his carriage, and was in the full blaze of his reputation when Nollekens was born.

Of his short-hand way of acquiring knowledge we have some account from himself. His dislike of academic instruction, and his natural and proper notion of seeing art through stirring life, are very visible in all he says or writes. Copying other men's works he considered to resemble pouring wine out of one vessel into another; there was no increase of quantity, and the flavour of the vintage was liable to evaporate. He wished to gather in the fruit, press the grapes, and pour out the wine for himself. His words are instructive; he is speaking of his own aspirations after fame, and the unsatisfactory mode of study commonly recommended to students.

"Many reasons led me to wish that I could find the shorter path—fix forms and characters in my mind—and, instead of copying the lines, try to read the language, and, if possible, find the grammar of the art, by bringing into one focus the various observations I had made, and then trying by my power on the canvas how far my plan enabled me to combine and apply them to practice. For this purpose I considered what various ways, and to what different purposes, the memory might be applied; and fell upon one most suitable to my situation and idle disposition;—laying it down first as an axiom, that he who could by any means acquire and retain in his memory perfect ideas of the subjects he meant to draw, would have as clear a knowledge of the figure as a man who can write freely hath of the twenty-five letters of the alphabet, and their infinite combinations."

In this power of picturing in air the characters which composed his productions, Hogarth had great mastery. No man indeed can make a true design who is deficient in pictorial fancy, and wants the vivid imagination which calls up, in moving form and breathing expression, the beings with whom he is to people his canvas. By a succession of

efforts—by slow and repeated touches—by studying a posture here and a character there—glancing one moment at life and another at art—a man may elaborate out a work which shall claim and even obtain a place amongst the productions of genius; but it will want those vivid and natural graces, and that lifelike air, which an imagination containing the picture within itself stamps upon its creations: even though blameless in its separate parts, it will appear defective as a whole.

Possessing this vividness of imagination, Hogarth was ready at a moment to embody his subjects; and by a sagacity all his own, and a spirit of observation which few have equalled, he had ever original characters at command. He seldom copied on the spot the peculiar objects which caught his notice; he committed them to memory, and his memory, accustomed to the task, never failed him. If, however, some singularly fantastic form or *outré* face came in his way, he made a sketch on the nail of his thumb, and carried it home to expand at leisure.

"I had (he writes) one material advantage over my competitors, viz., the early habit I acquired of retaining in my mind's eye, without coldly copying it on the spot, whatever I intended to imitate. Sometimes, but too seldom, I took the life for correcting the parts I had not perfectly enough remembered, and then I transferred them into my own compositions. Instead of burdening the memory with musty rules, or tiring the eye with copying dry or damaged pictures, I have ever found studying from nature the shortest and safest way of obtaining knowledge in my art. A choice of composition was the next thing to be considered, and my constitutional idleness naturally led me to the use of such materials as I had previously collected; and to this I was further induced by thinking that, if properly combined, they might be made the most useful to society in painting, although similar subjects had often failed in writing and preaching."

From a mind so formed, a hand so diligent, and a spirit so observing, it was natural to expect something striking and original. Of his first attempt at satire, the following story is related by Nichols, who had it from one of Ho-

garth's fellow-workmen:—One summer Sunday during his apprenticeship, he went with three companions to Highgate, and the weather being warm and the way dusty, they went into a public-house and called for ale. There happened to be other customers in the house, who to free drinking added fierce talking, and a quarrel ensued. One of them, on receiving a blow with the bottom of a quart pot, looked so ludicrously rueful, that Hogarth snatched out a pencil and sketched him as he stood. It was very like and very laughable, and contributed to the restoration of order and good-humour. On another occasion he strolled, with Hayman the painter, into a cellar, where two women of loose life were quarrelling in their cups. One of them filled her mouth with brandy and spirted it dexterously in the eyes of her antagonist. "See! see!" said Hogarth, taking out his tablets and sketching her—"look at the brimstone's mouth." This virago figures in "Modern Midnight Conversation."

Anecdotes such as these were related in vain to Lord Orford, who was too dainty and delicate to be the biographer of a man accustomed to search in scenes of low sensuality, as well as elsewhere, for the materials of his productions. That a biographer with gold buckles in his shoes should hesitate to follow the steps of one who was no picker of paths, was natural; nor is it matter of surprise that a Horace Walpole should conclude the conversation of a Hogarth to have been gross, and his mind uninformed—Lord Orford considered all men as uninformed who had not received an university education; and all human beings as gross in conversation who were unacquainted with the conventional courtesies of fashionable life.

Ireland, too, in a work full of information concerning our artist's compositions and character, considers him as an unenlightened man, and one who "had not much bias towards what has obtained the name of learning."

If Hogarth showed little bias towards learning, it was because his powerful mind was directed to studies where the knowledge of actual life in all its varieties was chiefly essential—where an eye for the sarcastic and the ludicrous, and a mind to penetrate motives and weigh

character, were worth all the lights of either school or college. But there is no proof that he was a man gross and uninformed, or that he thought lightly of learning. He was indeed a zealous worshipper of knowledge; but he loved to pluck the fruit fresh from the tree with his own hand. Of want of learning no man of Hogarth's pitch of mind will boast; it is the open sesame which clears up the mysteries of ancient lore, and acquaints us with the lofty souls and social sympathies of the great worthies of the world. Our artist had not time for everything; he could not, circumstanced as he was, have been both a scholar of any eminence, and the first man in a new walk of art. But it is unjust to set him down as despising in the abstract, what his own great natural genius enabled him to do without.

Ireland having asserted that Hogarth had little bias towards learning, and Walpole that he was gross and ignorant, Nichols brings against him the additional charge of extreme poverty in his earlier years. There is no proof that he suffered under the twofold evil of ignorance and want. That his parents were poor we have his own admission; but he never spoke of absolute indigence. The wages of industry would do the same for him as for others: his food might be plain and his dress coarse—his lodging mean, and little money in his pocket; still he was no object of compassion while the expense of his living was covered by his earnings. "Owing," says Hogarth, "to my desire to qualify myself for engraving on copper, and to the loss which I sustained by piratical copies of some of my earlier and most popular prints, I *could do little more than maintain myself* until I was near thirty; but even then I was a punctual paymaster."

"Being one day," says Nichols, "distressed to raise so trifling a sum as twenty shillings—in order to be revenged of his landlady, who strove to compel him to payment, he drew her as ugly as possible, and in that single portrait gave marks of the dawn of superior genius. Other authorities intimate, that had such an accident ever happened to Hogarth, he would hardly have failed to talk of it afterwards, as he was always fond of contrasting the necessities

of his youth with the affluence of his maturer age. He has been heard to say of himself, "I remember the time when I have gone moping into the city with scarce a shilling, but as soon as I have received ten guineas there for a plate, I have returned home, put on my sword, and sallied out again with all the confidence of a man who had thousands in his pockets."

That young Hogarth held the same contest with fortune for bread, which is the usual lot of unfriended genius, there can be little doubt. Before the world felt his talents, and while he was storing his mind and his portfolio with nature and character, then was the season of fluctuating spirits, rising and falling hopes, churlish landladies, and importunate creditors. When he had conquered all these difficulties, his vanity—and who would not be vain in such circumstances?—loved to dwell on those scenes of labour and privation, and fight over again the battle which ended so honourably to him as a man, and so gloriously to him as an artist. But, even under the worst view which he himself gives of his condition, one can hardly call Hogarth *poor;* he paid all he owed—he had a sword at home, a shilling in his pocket, and an engraving in his hands which raised ten guineas. With a head so clear, hands so clever, and youth and independent feelings on his side, he could not be destitute—and he never was.

With much appearance of accuracy, Ireland releases him from his apprenticeship in 1718, when he was one-and-twenty years old; and Walpole sends him to the academy in St. Martin's Lane, where he "studied drawing from the life, in which he never attained great excellence." Of his habits of diligence in drawing from set figures I have already spoken, and in his own words, he loved rather to study in the wild academy of nature, and to seek in life for those materials with which neither lectures nor examples could supply him.—If we allow seven years for the term of his apprenticeship, he must have been indentured at fourteen; his father, therefore, may be relieved from the suspicion of inattention to his education—he seems to have instilled as much knowledge into the mind of his only son as was consistent with the boy's years and habits.

The first work of any merit which appeared from the hand of Hogarth, was called "The Taste of the Town,"—engraven in 1724.[1] The reigning follies of the day were sharply lashed; and the town was so much taken with this satiric image of itself, that it became profitable to pirate the piece: a fraud which deprived the artist of the fruit of his labour, and compelled him to sell his etchings at any price the piratical printseller chose to give. "The Taste of the Town (says Ireland) is now entitled The Small Masquerade Ticket, or Burlington Gate, in which the follies of the town are severely satirized by the representation of multitudes properly habited crowding to the masquerade. The leader of the figures wears a cap and bells, and a garter round his right leg, while before him a satyr holds a purse containing a thousand pounds—a satirical glance at majesty; the kneeling figure, pouring eight thousand pounds at the feet of Cuzzoni, the Italian singer, has been said to resemble Lord Peterborough. Opera, masque, and pantomime are in glory, while the works of our great dramatists are trundled to oblivion on a wheelbarrow. On the summit of Burlington Gate he placed the fashionable artist, William Kent, brandishing his palette and pencils, with Michael Angelo and Raphael for supporters."

At this time it appears that he did not apply himself wholly to original compositions; he had a mother and

[1] According to Sala this appeared in 1723; but before this, in 1721, Hogarth had published his "Allegory of the South Sea," which was sold at the price of one shilling by Mrs. Chilcot, in Westminster Hall, and B. Caldwell, in Newgate Street. In this satirical print Hogarth has represented a company of all ranks and ages seated on the wooden horses of a merry-go-round, which whirls dizzily above the heads of the spectators. In the foreground one man is broken on the wheel, and another to the right is being flogged. On the left is a winged demon hacking at a figure of Fortune with a scythe, while in the background are crowds of women pushing into a doorway, above which is written "*Raffle for husbands with lottery fortunes in here.*" An inscription on the base of a tall pillar to the right records that "This monument was erected in memory of the destruction of the city by the South Sea, 1720."

The humour in this piece is not as evident as in Hogarth's later productions, yet we have a little touch of it in the man who is in such ecstasies at beholding the mutilated figure of Fortune, that he does not perceive that a thief is picking his pocket.—Ed.

sisters to assist, and—success in his new and original path being uncertain—continued to make sure of bread by engraving arms and crests. Coats-of-arms, symbols, ciphers, shop-bills, and etchings on bowls and tankards, have been since collected and shown to the world as productions of the early days of Hogarth. That some of these bear an impress like his I mean not to deny; but all the works which the necessities of genius compel it to perform, are not therefore excellent and worthy of being treasured up. The poet wisely says, that

> "Strong necessity supreme is
> 'Mongst sons of men."

All artists are more or less compelled to toil for subsistence; and even the most fortunate often execute commissions alien to their feelings. By these things they should not be judged.

Hogarth soon felt where his strength was to lie; and others began to feel it too. The booksellers employed him to embellish books with cuts and frontispieces. Illustrations of literature were not then very common, nor was the style of their execution in general at all creditable to art. In Mortraye's "Travels" there are fourteen cuts bearing the name of Hogarth; seven more may be found in the "Golden Ass of Apuleius," printed in 1724; in Beaver's "Military Punishments of the Ancients" there are fifteen headpieces; and five frontispieces from the same hand decorate the five volumes of "Cassandra," printed in 1725. He likewise designed and engraved two cuts for "Perseus and Andromeda;" and, what lay more out of his way, two for Milton.[1] The date of the latter is uncertain; nor have I found that they incurred censure or received praise, unless they are

[1] These are very strange performances, not at all in Hogarth's usual style. They are surmised by Nichols to have been executed for some operatic piece or oratorio, and not for any edition of Milton. The one print represents Satan seated on a throne in a magnificent hall, with a countless host surging beneath him; the other the Father and Son in heaven, surrounded by a glory of cherubim. A ray of light, looking something like a huge cylinder, departs from the rainbow on which they are seated, designed, it is supposed, to point the way to the newly-created world. Satan, here represented as a little black imp, takes the same course.—ED.

included in the following sweeping condemnation of Walpole: "No symptoms of genius," says he, "dawned in those early plates." There is, indeed, little of that peculiar spirit which distinguished his after-works; but they are well worth examination, were it but to learn the lesson which genius reckons ungracious—that no distinction is to be obtained without long study and well-directed labour.

Into the "Hudibras," published in 1726, a larger portion of his satiric spirit was infused. "This was among the first of his works," observes Walpole, "that marked him as a man above the common; yet in what made him then noticed, it surprises me now to find so little humour in an undertaking so congenial to his talents." This censure is to be admitted with some abatement. That he has given in the seventeen plates of that performance vivid and accurate images of his witty original, I am not prepared to say. It is seldom that the pencil catches the same inspiration as the pen, and it would be wonderful if it did. There are many bright points and graces in poetry on which painting can find no colours to bestow, which look simple and seem easy to be embodied, but which are too elusive and quicksilvery to take a hue and shape. The poetry of Butler, graphic as it is, and full of images of fun and humour, will always keep its ascendancy, and, in the width of its range, and by the rapidity of its motion, baffle the rivalry of any pencil. It is not where Hogarth has followed, but where he has departed from the poet, that the charm of his embellishments lies. By one or two skilful additions, awakening a similar train of thought and humour, he has increased the graphic glee of his author.

The work was published by subscription, and Allan Ramsay, the poet—a man after Hogarth's own heart, and not unlike him in look—a lover of rough ready wit, broad humour, and social merriment—subscribed—he was a bookseller as well as a poet—for thirty copies. Twelve of the plates were published separately, and inscribed by the artist to "William Ward, of Great Houghton, Northamptonshire, and Allan Ramsay of Edinburgh."[1] A little praise

[1] These are generally known as the "large set."—Ed.

was then valuable; kindness shown to genius at the commencement of its career is seldom forgotten. A friendly intercourse (of which, however, I can discover no farther traces than some hasty lines by the poet) seems to have been carried on after this between Ramsay and Hogarth. But the poet's son forgot his father's affection, in the feud which arose between the members of the fraternity of painters and Hogarth. The animosities of artists are only surpassed in sharpness and malignity by those of religious sects. Of these designs Hogarth thought so well, that in after-life he often lamented having parted with them.

A patron very different from the poet of the "Gentle Shepherd" appeared in the person of W. Bowles, of the Black Horse in Cornhill. "I have been told," says Nichols, "that he bought many a plate from Hogarth by the weight of the copper, but am only certain that this occurrence happened in a single instance, when the elder Bowles offered, over a bottle, half-a-crown a pound weight for a plate just then completed." This story is an odd one; and yet there can be little doubt of its truth; nor, indeed, was it to every one that the generous Bowles offered such high terms. Major, the engraver, said, that when he was young and desirous to go abroad for improvement, he offered for sale two plates of landscapes, one of them called "Evening," which he had just finished. This was one of his best works. Bowles was much pleased with the performance, and said, as improvement was Mr. Major's object, he would give him in exchange two pieces of plain copper of the same dimensions. This patron had the true English notion of things. Thornhill sold paintings to the government at two guineas the Flemish ell; and Hogarth's engravings were estimated at half-a-crown per pound avoirdupois.

Though Hogarth at this period used both the crayon and the brush, he was still little known except as an engraver. He was looked upon generally as a mere etcher of copper, and his productions were regarded—I copy with shame and anger the unjust and injurious language of Fuseli—"as the chronicle of scandal, and the history-book of the vulgar." If a man like Fuseli could write thus when Ho-

garth had the fame of many years on his head, we may wonder less at the conduct of one Morris, an upholsterer, who engaged him in 1727 to make a design for tapestry, and afterwards *discovered* to his confusion that he had commissioned an engraver instead of a painter. The work ordered by the upholsterer was a representation of the Element Earth; and in what fashion the task was performed cannot now be known. Morris, however, refused to pay for it, and was sued for the price—twenty pounds for workmanship, and ten pounds for materials.

"I was informed," said the defendant, when the trial came on before the Lord Chief-Justice, "by Mr. Hogarth, that he was skilled in painting, and could execute the design of the Element of the Earth in a workmanlike manner. On learning, however, afterwards that he was an engraver and not a painter, I became uneasy, and sent one of my servants to him, who stated my apprehensions, to which Mr. Hogarth replied that it was certainly a bold and unusual kind of undertaking, and if Mr. Morris did not like it when finished he should not be asked to pay for it. The work was completed and sent home; but my tapestry-workers, who are mostly foreigners, and some of them the finest hands in Europe, and perfect judges of performances of that nature, were all of opinion that it was not finished in a workmanlike manner, and that it was impossible to execute tapestry by it." Such was this classical upholder's defence, and it prevailed.

Patronage by the pound weight, and jury-verdicts which refused to him the name of a painter, suited ill with the haughty heart and sarcastic spirit of Hogarth. A more congenial subject than that suggested by Mr. Morris ere long presented itself, and called forth his proper powers. Bambridge, warden of the Fleet Prison, and Huggins, his predecessor, were accused, in 1729, before the House of Commons, of breaches of trust, extortions and cruelties, and sent to Newgate. The examination passed in the presence of Hogarth, who sketched the scene in a way which has called the following happy description from the pen of Walpole:—

"The scene is a committee of the Commons; on the

table are the instruments of torture. A prisoner in rags and half starved appears before them; the poor man has a good countenance, which adds to the interest. On the other hand is the inhuman jailer. It is the very figure which Salvator Rosa would have drawn for Iago in the moment of detection. Villany, fear, and conscience are mixed in yellow and livid upon his countenance; his lips are contracted by tremor, his face advances as eager to lie, his legs step back as thinking to make his escape, one hand is thrust forward into his bosom, the fingers of the other are catching uncertainly at his buttonholes. If this was a portrait, it is the most striking that ever was drawn; if it was not, still finer." The face was that of Bambridge, the rest was the imagination of the artist.

By labouring for the booksellers, and by designing and etching little scenes of town life and folly, Hogarth succeeded in gradually withdrawing himself from the drudgery of his original profession, and in establishing a name with the world for satiric skill and dramatic sketching. But the prices which he obtained were small—so little, indeed, compared with what others received then, and what he was afterwards paid, that he seems ashamed to mention them. He could not disguise from himself that artists of very inferior powers, but of more courtly address, were growing rich by painting portraits of the opulent and the vain, and lived in splendour and affluence. Kent, the architect and painter, seems to have fixed, if he did not merit, Hogarth's peculiar indignation: he was, as we have already seen, the first artist who felt the touch of his satiric hand. This man had painted an altar-piece for St. Clement's Church, sufficiently absurd of itself for all the purposes of ridicule; but Hogarth was not satisfied till he had increased the public merriment by a caricature. There was, indeed, little to do, but it was done effectually. The print raised an universal laugh through the parish, and Gibson, Bishop of London, on his visitation to the church, smiled as he looked on the original, and ordered the churchwardens to remove it. It was taken down accordingly, September 7, 1725, on which a parishioner wrote and printed a congratulatory letter, with a motto from Exodus, "And he

took the calf which they had made, and burnt it in the fire, and ground it to powder, and strewed it upon the water, and made the children of Israel drink of it." There is a puritanic touch in this. No wonder that Hogarth was indignant at the popularity of such a pretender in painting as Kent, who, not contented with the fame of an architect and ornamental gardener, aspired also to the merits of sculpture, and encumbered Westminster Abbey with some of his absurd conceptions. For his popularity we have the words of Walpole: "He was not only consulted for furniture, as frames of pictures, glasses, tables, chairs, &c., but for plate, for a barge, for a cradle. And so impetuous was fashion, that two great ladies prevailed on him to make designs for their birth-day gowns. The one he dressed in a petticoat decorated with columns of the five orders, and the other like a bronze, in a copper-coloured satin, with ornaments of gold."

The unsparing ridicule which the prints of Hogarth threw on this personage, was very acceptable to Sir James Thornhill, who, desirous of distinction as an architect, found Kent, in his fourfold capacity of painter, sculptor, architect, and ornamental gardener, a rival that met him at every turn. These satiric compositions are supposed by Ireland to have been something like the price of admission tickets to Sir James Thornhill's academy in St. Martin's Lane. That Hogarth did attend that academy he has himself recorded; but his time was wasted in controversies with his brother students, on the propriety of studying art from paintings or from nature. In the acrimony of disputation he learned to despise the former too much; and declaimed vigorously against borrowed postures and academic groups. "The most original mind (said he), if habituated to these exercises, becomes inoculated with the style of others, and loses the power of stamping a spirit of its own on canvas." On this theme he was fluent and bitter. He was amused, however, with the following retort of one of his brethren. "Hogarth, by the doctrine which you preach and practise, it seems that the only way to draw well is not to draw at all; and I suppose if you wrote on the art of swimming, you would not permit your

scholars to go into the water—till they had learned to swim."

He had, however, other motives than an artist's for courting the notice of Thornhill—and frequenting his academy. To what their intimacy amounted previously we know not; but on the 23rd of March, 1729, Hogarth, then in his thirty-second year, married Jane, the only daughter of Sir James, aged twenty.[1] He is called in the marriage register of the parish, an eminent designer and engraver—and his father-in-law, serjeant-painter and history-painter to the king. The match was neither hasty nor imprudent on the side of the lady; but it was accomplished without the consent of parents, and her father was offended. Thornhill had been, or was then, a member of parliament—was history-painter to the king, and a person of public importance and fame in his day, and conceived that his only daughter might have been wooed and won by a man of higher birth and larger income. He could not foresee his unwelcome son-in-law's future eminence; and he knew his present inability to maintain his wife in the style in which she had been educated. Hogarth was as yet acknowledged by few even as a painter; his works were obviously deficient in the elegant and elaborate drawing recommended by academies, and preached upon by Sir James himself; they wanted harmony of colouring; and, more than all, they bore a stamp and impress of thought materially different from what had found favour with any artist of established reputation. Hapless, no doubt, appeared the aspirations of one who turned obstinately aside from the beaten way—who had the audacity to despise gods and goddesses, regarded allegory as a subject for laughter, and was seeking to make sentiment triumph over mere form, and human nature over conventional beauty. The old man's wrath was of two years' duration; it subsided as all fiery feelings must. He was mollified by the entreaties of his wife, the submissiveness of his daughter, and—above all, we may believe—by the rising reputation of Hogarth.

[1] They were married at old Paddington Church. The marriage is recorded in Hogarth's own little Bible, now in the possession of Mr. Graves, the eminent printseller.—Ed.

His high spirit, no doubt, inclined him to resent the conduct of Sir James Thornhill; but his wife's affection and his own good sense subdued the rising feeling, and he set himself diligently to work, in the hope of being able to maintain his wife in such fashion as became her. He resolved to be wise and prudent; laid aside his satiric designs—took a house in Leicester Fields, and commenced portrait-painter; "the most ill-suited employment," says Walpole, "to a man whose turn was certainly not flattery, nor his talent adapted to look on vanity without a sneer. Yet his facility in catching a likeness, and the method he chose of painting familiar and conversation pieces in small, then a novelty, drew him prodigious business for some time. It did not last, either from his applying to the real bent of his disposition, or from his customers apprehending that a satirist was too formidable a confessor for the devotees of self-love."

To be eminently popular in portrait-painting requires more than mere skill and talent. Hogarth was a man of plain manners, unpolished address, and encumbered with the dangerous reputation of a satirist. He was unacquainted with the art of charming a peer into a patron, by putting him into raptures with his own good looks. There were other drawbacks. The calm contemplative look, the elegance of form without the grace of action, and motionless repose approaching to slumber, were not for him whose strength lay in kindling figures into life, and tossing them into business. A collection of isolated lords and ladies, each looking more lazily than the other into vacancy, compared with historical pictures, are as recruits drawn up in line and put into position by the drill-sergeant, compared to soldiers engaged in the tumult of battle, animated with high passions, and determined to do or die.

Hogarth's account of this part of his life is brief and modest. "I married (he says), and commenced painter of small conversation pieces from twelve to fifteen inches high. This, having novelty, succeeded for a few years. But though it gave somewhat more scope for the fancy, it was still but a less kind of drudgery; and as I could not bring myself to act like some of my brethren, and make it a sort of manu-

factory to be carried on by the help of backgrounds and drapery painters, it was not sufficiently profitable to pay the expenses my family required." This is a very imperfect account of his labours as a portrait-painter; he seems unwilling to dwell on a department wherein he was not quite successful, and he hastens to the compositions to which he owes his immortality. It would, however, be unjust to his memory to pass over the matter so lightly; for, in truth, some of his portraits are very vigorous performances.[1]

Of his conversation pieces there are many—of his life-size portraits few. Compared with the productions of the great masters of the art of portraiture, those of Hogarth are alike distinguished for their vigorous coarseness and their literal nature. They are less deficient in ease and expression than in those studied airs and graceful affectations by which so many face-makers have become famous. Ladies, accustomed to come from the hands of men practised in professional flattery with the airs of goddesses, and sometimes with the name, would ill endure such a plain-spoken mirror as Hogarth's. Another circumstance must be mentioned. It was the practice of those days to see genius much more willingly and readily in the works of the dead than in those of the living: and perhaps the fashion is not yet gone out. There is no danger of making a mistake in praising a Raphael or Correggio, but there is some in determining the merits of any new production; and great lords—even now-a-days—are frugal of commendation, till the voice of the people gives confidence to their taste. With such men it was the fortune of our portrait-painter to come frequently in contact; disputes ensued; and he was no picker of pleasant words. None of these circumstances were very likely either to augment the number of Hogarth's sitters, or to cheat him into good-humour with an originally uncongenial task.

His portraits of himself are all very clever, and all very like. In one he is accompanied by a bull-dog of the true English breed; and in another he is seated in his study,

[1] Undoubtedly they are. Allan Cunningham even scarcely does justice to Hogarth's high powers of realistic portrait painting.—Ed.

with his pencil ready, and his eye fixed and intent on a figure which he is sketching on the canvas. He has a short, good-humoured face, full of health, observation, and sagacity. He treated his own physiognomy as he treated his friends'—seized the character strongly, and left grace and elegance to those who were unable to cope with mind and spirit. On the palette which belongs to the first-named of these two portraits there is drawn a waving line, with the words, "Line of beauty"—a hieroglyphic of which no one could at first divine the meaning. The mystery was afterwards solved in his "Analysis of Beauty," a volume which gained Hogarth few friends and many enemies.

In his family-piece of Mr. and Mrs. Garrick, there is more nature and less dignity than was likely to please a pair who, constitutionally vain, had been fed daily and nightly, through a long series of years, with the flatteries of play-writing poets, play-going lords, and player-admiring painters. The great Roscius appeared seated by an ordinary-looking table, with a not very extraordinary-looking wife coming behind him and taking the pen out of his hand. Garrick was dissatisfied with the representation of himself, and said so; the lady said nothing as to herself, but complained that her dear husband looked less noble in art than in nature. Hogarth drew his pencil across David's mouth, and never touched the piece again. The picture was unpaid for at Hogarth's death, and his widow sent it to Mrs. Garrick, unaccompanied by any demand. In Garrick as Richard the Third he was more fortunate. The tyrant starts from his couch in true terror and natural agony. The figure, however, is too muscular and massy.

Hogarth's portrait of Henry Fielding, executed after death from recollection, is remarkable as being the only likeness extant of the prince of English novelists. It has various histories. According to Murphy, Fielding had made many promises to sit to Hogarth, for whose genius he had a high esteem, but died without fulfilling them; a lady accidentally cut a profile with her scissors, which recalled Fielding's face so completely to Hogarth's memory, that he took up the outline, corrected and finished it, and made a capital likeness. The world is seldom satisfied

with a common account of anything that interests it—more especially as a marvellous one is easily manufactured. The following, then, is the second history. Garrick, having dressed himself in a suit of Fielding's clothes, presented himself unexpectedly before the artist, mimicking the step and assuming the look of their deceased friend. Hogarth was much affected at first, but, on recovering, took his pencil, and drew the portrait. For those who love a soberer history, the third edition is ready. Mrs. Hogarth, when questioned concerning it, said, that she remembered the affair well; her husband began the picture, and finished it, one evening in his own house, and sitting by her side.[1]

Captain Coram, the projector of the Foundling Hospital, sat for his portrait to Hogarth, and it is one of the best he ever painted.[2] There is a natural dignity and great benevolence expressed in a face which, in the original, was rough and forbidding. This worthy man, having laid out his fortune and impaired his health in acts of charity and mercy, was reduced to poverty in his old age. An annuity of a hundred pounds was privately purchased, and when it was presented to him he said, "I did not waste the wealth which I possessed in self-indulgence or vain expense, and am not ashamed to own that in my old age I am poor."

The last which I shall notice of this class of productions is the portrait of the celebrated demagogue John Wilkes. This singular performance originated in a quarrel with that witty libertine and his associate Churchill, the poet: it immediately followed an article, from the pen of Wilkes, in the "North Briton," which insulted Hogarth as a man and traduced him as an artist. It is so little of a caricature, that Wilkes good-humouredly observes somewhere in

[1] Hogarth's portrait of Fielding is a simple outline sketch drawn in his usual manner in a few bold lines. It is set in an oval frame and raised on a shelf upon which lie copies of Fielding's works, an ink-bottle, a sword, and two masks. The likeness is evidently characteristic. It was intended as a frontispiece for an edition of Fielding, and was engraved for this purpose by Basire.—Ed.

[2] This picture now hangs in the Foundling Hospital, together with "The March to Finchley," which belongs to the same institution.—Ed.

his correspondence, "I am growing every day more and more like my portrait by Hogarth." The terrible scourge of the satirist fell bitterly upon the personal and moral deformities of the man. Compared with his chastisement the hangman's whip is but a proverb, and the pillory a post of honour. He might hope oblivion from the infamy of both; but from Hogarth there was no escape. It was little indeed that the artist had to do, to brand and emblazon him with the vices of his nature; but with how much discrimination that little is done! He took up the correct portrait, which Walpole upbraids him with skulking into a court of law to obtain, and in a few touches the man sunk, and the demon of hypocrisy and sensuality sat in his stead. It is a fiend, and yet it is Wilkes still. It is said that when he had finished this remarkable portrait, the former friendship of Wilkes overcame him, and he threw it into the fire, from which it was saved by the interposition of his wife.[1]

To describe his portraits, or even barely to enumerate them, would take more space than can be spared; but the reader will be pleased to know the extent of his employment and the nature of his engagements. I transcribe the following account from a manuscript list written by the artist, and entitled "Account taken January 1st, 1731, of all the pictures that remain unfinished—half-payment received." He had been then married about a year.

"A family-piece, consisting of four figures, for Mr. Rich, begun in 1728. An assembly of twenty-five figures, for Lord Castlemain, begun Aug. 28, 1729. Family of four figures, for Mr. Wood, 1728. A conversation of six figures, for Mr. Cork, Nov. 1728. A family of five figures, for Mr. Jones, March, 1730. The committee of the House of Commons, for Sir Arch. Grant, Nov. 5, 1729; the Beggars'

[1] He does not seem to have been troubled with much compunction when he wrote about it:—"This renowned patriot's portrait, drawn like as I could as to features, and marked with some indications of his mind, fully answered my purpose. The ridiculous was apparent to every eye! A Brutus! A saviour of his country with such an aspect was so arrant a farce, that, though it gave rise to much laughter in the lookers-on, galled both him and his adherents to the bone."—Ed.

Opera, for ditto. A single figure, for Mr. Kirkman, April 18, 1730. A family of nine, for Mr. Vernon, Feb. 27, 1730. Another of two, for Mr. Cooper. Another of five, for the Duke of Montague. Two little pictures, for ditto. Single figure, for Sir Robert Pye, Nov. 18, 1730. Two little pictures, called 'Before and After,' for Mr. Thomson, Dec. 7, 1730. A head, for Mr. Sarmond, Jan. 12, 1730—Pictures bespoke for the present year." Here the memorandum concludes.[1] There is nothing said of the amount of price, and it has been observed that Hogarth has nowhere acknowledged what money he received for his family-pieces and portraits. For his Garrick as Richard the Third he had £200; but that was later in life, when his fame justified the demand. It is believed that, at the period we are now treating, his prices were extremely low.

I have already mentioned some of the reasons which Hogarth assigned for relinquishing portrait painting; there were other reasons behind, and these he expressed in a manner sufficiently bitter when, near the close of his career, he looked back on early days, and thought of the impediments which rivalry and affectation had thrown in his way to riches and fame. "For the portrait of Garrick as Richard (says he) I received more than any English artist ever before received for a single portrait, and that too by the

[1] Two admirable portraits by Hogarth, of brilliant colouring and in an excellent state of preservation, have lately been bequeathed to the Fitzwilliam Museum at Cambridge. They represent a certain Dr. Thomas Arnold, of Ashby in Leicester, who is said to have been a personal friend of Hogarth's, and his daughter. It is recorded by one of his biographers that Hogarth was in the habit of going down to Ashby occasionally to stay with Dr. Arnold, and this would seem to be borne out by a landscape representing the house and park at Ashby, bequeathed with the two portraits, and which, according to family tradition, was also painted by Hogarth, although some authorities consider it to be an early Wilson. Hogarth's treatment of landscape is seen in several of his pictures, such as "The March to Finchley," two of the election series, the plate of "Evening," in "Times of the Day," and the little glimpse of sea and coast in the plate called "France;" but he did not often introduce landscape backgrounds, and very few examples of simple landscape by him are known. Among the two or three supposed to be by him may be mentioned an interesting little picture—a view of the Old Kent Road, in the possession of Mr. Prior, of Trinity College, Cambridge.—Ed.

sanction of several painters who were consulted about the price. Notwithstanding all this, the current remark was, that portraits were not my province; and I was tempted to abandon the only lucrative branch of the art; for the practice brought the whole nest of phyzmongers on my back, where they buzzed like so many hornets. All those people had their friends, whom they incessantly taught to call my women *harlots*—my 'Essay on Beauty' *borrowed*—and my engraving *contemptible*. This so much disgusted me that I sometimes declared I would never paint another portrait, and frequently refused when applied to; for I found, by mortifying experience, that whoever will succeed in this branch must adopt the mode recommended in Gay's 'Fables,' and make divinities of all who sit to him. Whether or not this childish affectation will ever be done away is a doubtful question; none of those who have attempted to reform it have yet succeeded; nor, unless portrait painters in general become more honest and their customers less vain, is there much reason to expect they ever will." . . . Hogarth afterwards embodied his satire in a small print, wherein the current of royal favour is set forth as watering the trees of Painting, Sculpture, and Architecture: the two latter flourish luxuriantly; but of the former a single branch, and a low one, alone remains green—and this, by an ingenious contrivance, is shown to represent Portrait.

During this busy period, whilst he was contending with the world for bread, and with his brother artists for reputation in "the only lucrative branch of the art," he was silently collecting materials for those works of a satirical and moral order on which his fame depends. He had not forgotten the precepts which he laid down, to the amusement of his fellow-students, about studying from living nature. To find excellence in art without perfection of form—to make use of human beings such as they moved and breathed before him—and to embody the characters with which observation had peopled his fancy, was the wish of Hogarth; and to this task he now addressed himself with the alacrity of one stung by disappointment, and who is determined to vindicate his confidence in nature

and his consciousness of his own strength. The schools in which he delighted to study were the haunts of social freedom—scenes where the chained-up natures of men are let loose by passion, wine, and contradiction. With subjects well suiting the sarcastic talent of the artist London abounded, and neither public vice nor private deformity escaped his satiric strokes.

I have mentioned the displeasure of Sir James Thornhill respecting his daughter's marriage, and that time and the rising fame of his son-in-law softened the old gentleman's feelings *gradually* into kindness and affection. During this period Hogarth designed and etched the first portion of the "Harlot's Progress," so much to the gratification of Lady Thornhill, that she advised her daughter to place it in her father's way. "Accordingly one morning (says Nichols) Mrs. Hogarth conveyed it secretly into his dining-room. When he rose, he inquired from whence it came, and by whom it was brought. When he was told, he cried out, 'Very well! very well! The man who can make works like this, can maintain a wife without a portion.' He designed this remark as an excuse for keeping his purse-strings close; but soon after became both reconciled and generous to the young people." The reconciliation was sincere. Hogarth was ever the earnest admirer and the ready defender of the conduct and reputation of Sir James Thornhill.

The artist has told with the pen the reasons which induced him to "turn his thoughts to painting and engraving subjects of a modern kind and moral nature—a field not broken up in any country or age." I transcribe his own memorandums.

"The reasons which induced me to adopt this mode of designing were, that I thought both critics and painters had, in the historical style, quite overlooked that intermediate species of subjects which may be placed between the sublime and the grotesque. I therefore wished to compose pictures on canvas similar to representations on the stage; and further hope that they will be tried by the same test and criticised by the same criterion. Let it be observed, that I mean to speak only of those scenes where the human

species are actors, and these I think have not often been delineated in a way of which they are worthy and capable.

"In these compositions, those subjects that will both entertain and inform the mind, bid fair to be of the greatest public utility, and must therefore be entitled to rank in the highest class. If the execution is difficult—though that is but a secondary merit—the author has a claim to a higher degree of praise. If this be admitted, comedy in painting, as well as in writing, ought to be allotted the first place, as most capable of all these perfections, though the sublime, as it is called, has been opposed to it. Ocular demonstration will carry more conviction to the mind of a sensible man than all he would find in a thousand volumes, and this has been attempted in the prints I have composed. Let the decision be left to any unprejudiced eye; let the figures in either pictures or prints be considered as players, dressed either for the sublime—for genteel comedy or farce—for high or low life. I have endeavoured to treat my subjects as a dramatic writer; my picture is my stage, my men and women my players, who, by means of certain actions and gestures, are to exhibit a dumb show."

Those who are not satisfied of the accuracy of Hogarth's notions by his prints and his pictures, have little chance of being overcome by the force of his written arguments. I am afraid few will be disposed to rank comedy above tragedy, or common life higher than the heroic. The actions of lofty minds and the pursuits of inspired men will always maintain a higher place in the estimation of mankind, than the mere picturesque exploits of inferior characters. Entertainment and information are not all that the mind requires at the hand of an artist. We wish to be elevated by contemplating what is noble, to be warmed by the presence of the heroic, and charmed and made happy by the sight of purity and loveliness. We desire to share in the lofty movements of fine minds—to have communion with their images of what is godlike—and to take a part in the raptures of their love and in the ecstasies of all their musings. This is the chief end of high poetry, of high painting, and of high sculpture; and that man misunderstands the true spirit of those arts who

seeks to deprive them of a portion of their divinity, and argues that information and entertainment constitute their highest aim. It was well for Hogarth that he painted and engraved far beyond his own notions.

The "Harlot's Progress" was commenced in 1731, and appeared in a series of six plates in 1734. It was received with general approbation. Compliments in verse and prose were poured upon his prints and upon his person; and as money followed fame, his father-in-law was relieved from his fears and Hogarth from his necessities. The boldness of the attempt, the fascinating originality and liveliness of the conception, together with the rough ready vigour of the engraving, were felt and enjoyed by all. The public saw, with wonder, a series of productions combined into one grand moral and satiric story—exhibiting, in truth, a regular drama, neither wholly serious nor wholly comic, in which fashionable follies and moral corruptions had their beginning, their middle, and their end. Painters had been employed hitherto in investing ladies of loose reputation with the hues of heaven, and turning their paramours into Adonises; here was one who dipped both in the lake of darkness, and held them up together to the scorn and derision of mankind. Here we had portraits of the vicious and the vile—not the idle occupants of their places, but active in their calling, successful in their shame, and marching steadily and wickedly onwards; while not a porter looked at them in the printsellers' windows without feeling his burden lighter as he named them. Hogarth's fellow artists saw with surprise those monitory and sarcastic creations, which refused to owe any of their attractions to the established graces of the schools, or to the works of any artist new or old. The mixture of the satiric with the solemn—the pathetic with the ludicrous—of simplicity with cunning—and virtue with vice, was but an image of London and of human nature. The actors—some of them at least—might be regarded as the evil spirits of the time, whom a mighty hand had come to exorcise and lay.

The merit of those compositions lies less in their *personal* satire, than in their general presentation of the character of a great and lascivious city. Yet the portraitures mark

the intrepid spirit of the artist; for some whom he ridiculed were powerful enough to make their resentment be felt. For their resentment he appears to have cared little. One of them—a polished personage who moved in polite circles—still bore the brand of Pope when he was pilloried to everlasting infamy by Hogarth. To reclaim such a hardened offender was beyond satire's art, or even religion's power; to bottle up the viper was the surest way; and there he stands, expecting his fit associate, the procuress, to lead innocence into his toils. The dramatic cast of the whole composition—the march from modesty to folly—from folly to vice—from vice to crime—and from crime to death, contributed less, it is said, to the immediate popularity of the work than the portraits of Colonel Charteris, Kate Hackabout, Mother Needham, Parson Ford, and—one who should not be confounded with publicans and sinners—Mr. Justice Gonson.[1]

An anecdote is related by Nichols, which confirms the account of the sudden popularity of the "Harlot's Progress," and the accuracy of the likenesses. "At a Board of Treasury, which was held a day or two after the appearance of the third scene, a copy was shown by one of the lords, as containing, among other excellencies, a striking likeness of Sir John Gonson. It gave universal satisfaction; from the Treasury each lord repaired to the print-shop for a copy of it; and Hogarth rose completely into fame. This anecdote was related by Christopher Tilson, one of the chief clerks in the Treasury, and at that period under-secretary of state." Stories such as this are often told concerning the success of works of genius. The approbation of the Lords of the Treasury was as necessary, in the eyes of one of their clerks, for the fame of the "Harlot's Progress," as their signatures were for the validity and circulation of an official document. What signified genius, life, humour, and moral reprehension, until two or three

[1] Justice Gonson was distinguished for the extravagance of his addresses to the Grand Juries. They were composed, it is said, by Henley of the "Gilt Tub." The daily papers praised them in their own spirit. "Sir John Gonson," says the "Daily Post," "gave a most incomparable, learned, and fine charge to the Grand Jury."

official underlings clapped their hands at the likeness of Sir John Gonson? The clerks of the treasury, however, are quite mistaken: fame is still the free gift of *the people;* it was so in Hogarth's time, and it will continue to be so.

While Hogarth was etching the "Harlot's Progress," he found leisure to attack a more dangerous antagonist than either Kent, Ford, or Charteris. He had the audacity to satirize Pope. "Pope," says Johnson, "published in 1731 a poem called 'False Taste,' in which he very particularly and severely criticises the house, the furniture, the gardens, and the entertainments of Timon, a man of great wealth and little taste. By Timon he was universally supposed, and by the Earl of Burlington, to whom the poem is addressed, was privately said to mean the Duke of Chandos, a man perhaps too much delighted with pomp and show, but of a temper kind and beneficent, and who had consequently the voice of the public in his favour. A violent outcry was, therefore, raised against the ingratitude and treachery of Pope, who was said to be indebted to the patronage of Chandos for a present of a thousand pounds, and who gained the opportunity of insulting him by the kindness of his invitation."

Hogarth's hostility to Pope might have arisen from his connection with Sir James Thornhill, whose uneasiness under the success of Pope's friend Kent, the architect, has already been noticed; or it may have originated in the public odium which the poet incurred by wantonly attacking a kind and benevolent nobleman. Of his motives it is difficult to judge; of the sharpness of his satire there can be but one opinion. He has painted Burlington Gate, with Kent on the summit, in his threefold capacity of painter, sculptor, and architect, flourishing his palette and pencils over the heads of his astonished supporters, Michael Angelo and Raphael. On a scaffold, a little lower down, Pope stands, whitewashing the front; and whilst he makes pillar and pilaster shine, his wet brush besprinkles Lord Chandos, who is passing by. Lord Burlington serves the poet in the condition of a labourer.[1]

[1] This, though the description reads somewhat alike, is not the same plate as that described at page 55. This is sometimes called "The Man of Taste."

Of all this Pope took no notice, though he resented the "Pictured Shape" from the hand of a very inferior satirist. "Either Hogarth's obscurity," says Nichols, "was his protection from the lash of Pope, or perhaps the bard was too prudent to exasperate a painter who had already given such proofs of his ability in satire." The poet was not a person to be easily intimidated, and the name of Hogarth, then in full fame, must have been familiar to him. Pope remained silent, whether to the satisfaction or sorrow of the painter cannot now be ascertained. Much blame had been incurred by the satire on Chandos, and the poet might be unwilling to provoke further discussion or prolong the strife. It is, however, probable that Pope regarded Hogarth as a vulgar caricaturist, beneath his notice.

Thornhill now thought so well of his son-in-law that he sought his aid in some of his ornamental paintings. A task of that kind suited ill with the temper or the talents of Hogarth, nor did it correspond altogether with those theories of composition which he had laid down with so much ardour to his companions, and realized in his own works. But he probably considered the gods, goddesses, and allegorical progeny of his father-in-law as the best of their kind, and wished him to be the sole manufacturer of what he contemptuously called the "sublime." He certainly accompanied Sir James to Headly Park, in Hants, where he furnished a satyr, and some other undistinguished figures, to the story of Zephyrus and Flora.[1]

Hogarth, whose poverty had hitherto detained him in town, was now rich enough to take summer lodgings at

[1] Redgrave speaks of some paintings that seem to have some relation with Hogarth as still existing at No. 75, Dean Street, Soho, a house at present occupied by a manufacturer of tinned wares. In the hall of this house there is a long passage or gallery leading past the front door to two rooms at the back. One side of this is painted so as to imitate a colonnaded corridor with a balustrade above it, with figures represented as looking over it towards the spectator; these figures resemble in style those in Hogarth's pictures. As the house, according to tradition, was the one in which the Thornhills lived at the time when Hogarth ran away with their daughter, Redgrave thinks it not unlikely that Hogarth, before this event, might have helped his future father-in-law in its decoration, and have introduced the figures which were probably portraits. One of these figures is a black servant with a turban, such as we see in the "Marriage à la Mode."—Ed.

Lambeth Terrace; the house which he occupied is still shown, and a vine pointed out which he planted. While residing there he became intimate with the proprietors of Vauxhall Gardens, and embellished them with designs. He drew the "Four Parts of the Day," which Hayman copied; the two scenes of "Evening" and "Night," with portraits of Henry the Eighth and Anne Boleyn. For this assistance, which seems to have been gratuitous, the proprietor presented him with a gold ticket of admission for himself and a friend, which he enjoyed long, and his wife after him. Some of those works have perished; nor is this much to be regretted—they had little of the peculiar character which distinguished his other productions.

Among the manuscript notes left by Hogarth, in which he recorded the feelings of his early days, and the notions which he entertained in art, there is a short account of his labours as an historical painter. It cannot be commended for candour; and it exhibits the levity of a man who was so pleased with success of another sort, that he thought much too lightly of works which the ablest find some difficulty in performing. "I entertained some thoughts," he writes, "of succeeding in what the puffers in books call the great style of history painting; so that, without having had a stroke of this grand business before, I quitted small portraits and familiar conversations, and with a smile at my own temerity commenced history painter, and on a great staircase at St. Bartholomew's Hospital,[1] painted two Scripture stories—'The Pool of Bethesda' and 'The Good Samaritan'—with figures seven feet high. These I presented to the charity, and thought they might serve as a specimen to show that, were there an inclination in England for encouraging historical pictures, such a first essay might prove the painting them more easy attainable than is generally imagined. But as Religion, the great promoter of this style in other countries, rejected it in England, and I was unwilling to sink into a portrait manufacturer, and still ambitious of being singular, I soon dropped all expectations of advantage from that source, and returned to the pursuit of my former dealings with the public at large."

[1] He was a governor of this hospital.—Ed.

An inscription, which accompanies these historical paintings in the hospital, intimates that they were finished and presented by our artist in 1736. Of their character much need not be said; it is evident that Hogarth himself never considered them as the fairest fruits of his fancy, and others have treated them with still less respect. For historical and poetical subjects he seems to have possessed strong power; but he wanted discipline of hand, and that patient laboriousness of study without which works of a high order are seldom achieved. He had a keen sense of character, eminent skill in grouping, and facility perhaps unrivalled in giving to his numerous figures one combined, clear, and consistent employment; but of the art of elevating and ennobling he seems to have known little, and to have had no desire of learning more. The grandeur of a Macbeth or a Hamlet was not included in the theory which he was resolved to follow; it took in Thersites, but left out Agamemnon. He could hold the mirror up to folly, show vice her visage till she writhed with anguish, and paint lasciviousness as disgusting as one of Swift's Yahoos; but the serene beauty of innocence, and the dignity of tragic emotion, were things beyond his power, or at least beyond his ambition.

"He was ambitious (says Walpole) of distinguishing himself as a painter of history, but the burlesque turn of his mind mixed itself with the most serious subjects. In his 'Danaë,' the old nurse tries a coin of the golden shower with her teeth—to see if it is true gold; in the 'Pool of Bethesda,' a servant of a rich ulcerated lady beats back a poor man who sought the same celestial remedy. Both circumstances are justly thought—but rather too ludicrous. It is a much more capital fault that 'Danaë' herself is a mere nymph of Drury. He seems to have conceived no higher idea of beauty."

That Hogarth had ever dreamt of imitating the severity of the Italian school, there is no reason to believe. He saw the actions of mankind under another aspect—he painted under another planetary influence than that of the saints, and was not unwilling to mingle a little of a gayer feeling with the sincerity of the old strain. The story of

"Danaë" cannot well be told with a serious face, nor is it proper to paint it gravely—and Hogarth hung mirth and sobriety in a balance. The want of personal beauty in the lady is a more material blemish. The employment of the servant at the "Pool of Bethesda" is satirical, but not ludicrous. The conception of those works is their chief merit; nor are they necessarily unhistoric because they differ in character from works called historical. Satire and humour come within the meaning of history; they mingle in man's loftiest moods; they are present in epic poetry and in tragedy, and can only be required to keep away when sacred things are revealed and made visible. In all our poetry which is not devoted expressly to devotion, there are strokes of humour and passages of a gay and satiric kind; and, what is more to the purpose, they mingle with the most tragic occurrences of life. We ought, therefore, to be pleased with an artist who works so much in the spirit of nature and poetry.

The sarcasm and humour of his ordinary compositions infected, in the estimation of the world, the whole of his performances. Few seemed disposed to recognize, in any of his works, a higher aim than that of raising a laugh. Somerville, the poet, inscribed the "Rural Games" to Hogarth in these words:—"Permit me, Sir, to make choice of you for my patron, being the greatest master in the burlesque way. Your province is the town—leave me a small outride in the country, and I shall be content." Fielding had another feeling of the artist's merits:—"He who would call the ingenious Hogarth a burlesque painter, would, in my opinion, do him very little honour; for sure it is much easier, much less the subject of admiration, to paint a man with a nose, or any other feature, of a preposterous size, or to expose him in some absurd or monstrous attitude, than to express the affections of man on canvas. It hath been thought a vast commendation of a painter to say his figures seem to breathe; but surely it is a much greater and nobler applause that they appear to think." The "Harlot's Progress" is no burlesque production nor jesting matter—it exhibits, in the midst of humour and satire, a moral pathos which saddens the heart.

In 1734 Hogarth lost his father-in-law, of whose talents he thus wrote in the Obituary of Sylvanus Urban:—"Sir James Thornhill, Knight, the greatest history painter this kingdom ever produced: witness his elaborate works in Greenwich Hospital, the cupola of St. Paul's, the altar-pieces of All Souls' College in Oxford, and the church in Weymouth, where he was born. He was not only by patents appointed history painter to their late and present majesties, but serjeant-painter, by which he was to paint all the royal palaces, coaches, barges, and the royal navy. This late patent he surrendered in favour of his only son John. He left no other issue but one daughter, now the wife of Mr. William Hogarth, admired for his curious miniature conversation pieces." In the following year he lost his mother. She lived near him in Cecil Court, St. Martin's Lane, and her death was hastened by an alarm which she received from a fire in the neighbourhood, kindled by a woman in revenge for having received notice to quit her house. "I shall make," said this incendiary, "such a bonfire on the twentieth of June as will warm all my rascally neighbours." And she kept her word. Mrs. Hogarth lived to have her maternal solicitude rewarded by the eminence of her only son. Few mothers enjoy such honour, for few sons obtain such reputation. Her death was thus noticed in the newspapers:—"June 11th, 1735, died Mrs. Hogarth, mother of the celebrated painter"—a date which fails to correspond with the threat of her neighbour. She left her daughters—who lived unmarried—in a ready-made clothes shop at Little Britain Gate, where they were aided by their brother, who loved them very tenderly.[1]

[1] The shop card that Hogarth executed for these sisters when they set up in business, probably about 1725, is still extant. It represents a group of mother, father, and children, in a somewhat bare room, one of the children occupying attention by having a coat tried on. Above are the Royal arms, and beneath the inscription:—

"Mary & Ann Hogarth
From the old Frock shop the corner of the long walk facing the Cloysters. Removed to ye Kings Arms joyning to ye Little Britain-gate near Long Walk. Sells ye best and most Fashionable Ready Made Frocks, sutes of

The "Harlot's Progress" was followed by the "Rake's Progress," in a series of eight scenes, each complete in itself, and all uniting in relating a domestic history in a way at once natural, comic, satiric, and serious. The folly of man, however, was not so warmly welcomed by the public as that of woman had been. Hogarth was now his own dangerous rival. No one preceded, and no one had followed him, in his course; and the new work was measured less by its actual merits than by those of the "Harlot's Progress," and the surprise and admiration which that entirely novel performance had excited. The gloss of novelty was dimmed, the fine edge of curiosity was blunted, and criticism was no longer to be surprised into approbation; it had leisure to be captious and seek for faults—nor was it slow in finding them. "The 'Rake's Progress,'" says Walpole, "though perhaps superior to the 'Harlot's Progress,' had not so much success as the other, from want of novelty; or is the print of the 'Arrest' equal to the others." The inferiority of the "Arrest" was felt by Hogarth himself; he tried to improve it, but without success. He added figures; but neither heightened the action, nor brightened the sentiment.

The boldness, originality, and happy handling of those productions made them general favourites, and by the aid of the graver they were circulated over the island with the celerity of a telegraphic despatch. For the "Harlot's Progress" no less than 1,200 subscribers' names were entered on the artist's books. Theophilus Cibber converted it into a pantomime; it also appeared on the stage in the shape of a ballad opera, under the name of the "Jew Decoyed; or, a Harlot's Progress." Fan-mounts were likewise made containing miniature representations of all the six plates; these were usually printed off with red ink, three compartments on one side, and as many on the other. Of the "Rake's Progress" the success is less distinctly stated, but it must have been great; for it was satisfactory

Fustian, Ticken & Holland, Stript Dimmity & Flanel Wastcoats, blue and Canvas Frocks & bluecoat boys Dra^s. Likewise Fustians, Tickens, Hollands, White Stript Dimitys, White & Stript Flanels in y^e Piece by Wholesale or Retale at Reasonable Rates."—ED.

to the artist himself, who was now confirmed in his own notions of what was fittest for art. In those fourteen plates are contained the stories of two erring creatures who run their own separate careers; and never did dramatist or painter read two such sharp, satiric, and biting lessons to mankind. In the first series a young woman is conducted from innocence through six scenes of woe, wickedness, and guilt; coming pure from the country into the pollution of London, she is decoyed and deceived; she deceives in her turn; rises to guilty splendour, to sink in more guilty woe; and finally perishes amid wretches as guilty and as miserable as herself. In the other series of engravings a young man steps unexpectedly from poverty to fortune, from rustic dependence to lordly wealth, by heiring a sordid miser, of whose den and hoards the artist introduces him in the act of taking possession. He despises and deserts the woman whom he had wooed and vowed to marry; starts on a wild career of extravagance, dissipation, and folly; is beset and swindled by speculators of all kinds; parades through various haunts of sin and of splendour; till with a fortune dissipated, a constitution ruined, his fame blighted, and his mind touched, he is left raving mad in Bedlam. Mirth and woe, humour and seriousness, a brilliant rise and a dark ending, are seen often together in this world, and the painter has not separated them. The brief and agitated careers of two fellow-mortals are represented; the truth of nature is closely observed; a series of actions all conducive to the catastrophe are exhibited, and were they arranged for the stage, and personated by first-rate actors, hardly could the impression be more vivid, or the moral strengthened. Nor has the painter sought to win and move us by beauty of form, or by any exterior grace; there is youth, but there is little loveliness —nor is its absence felt.

"The curtain," says Walpole, "was now drawn aside, and his genius stood displayed in its full lustre. From time to time he continued to give these works, which should be immortal if the nature of his work will allow it. Even the receipts for his subscriptions had wit in them. Many of his plates he engraved himself, and often ex-

punged faces etched by his assistants when they had not done justice to his ideas."

The fame of Hogarth was now so well established that the daily and weekly collectors of news began to find it worth while to describe what works he was engaged in, and the characters which were satirized in his compositions. To the industry of those persons we are indebted for various curious particulars concerning the chief persons in the "Harlot's Progress" and "Rake's Progress." Mary Moffat and Kate Hackabout divide between them the fame of the frail heroine. The latter, a personage familiar to the sitting magistrates of the day, supplied the name; and the former, a free dame who lived in some state, suggested the circumstance of beating hemp in the House of Correction in a gown richly laced with silver. The patched and sanctified-looking procuress was a certain Mother Needham, of whose history the catastrophe may be sufficient. She incurred in her vocation sentence to be pilloried in Park Lane, and was so roughly handled by the populace that she survived but a few days.

The infamous life of Colonel Charteris was notorious, and our artist has not spared him. After the verse of Pope and the pencil of Hogarth, but one thing more could be wanted, and the profligate obtained that also—to wit, an epitaph by Dr. Arbuthnot: "Here continueth to rot the body of Francis Charteris, who, with an inflexible constancy, and inimitable uniformity of life, persisted, in spite of age and infirmities, in the practice of every human vice, excepting prodigality and hypocrisy; his insatiable avarice exempted him from the first—his matchless impudence from the second."

Of Justice Gonson, who was indefatigable in rummaging out ladies of loose reputation, and fortunate in the detection of thieves and robbers, it is needless to speak, since his looks have had the sanction of the lords of the treasury, and his voice the satiric commendation of Pope—

> "Talkers I've learn'd to bear; Motteux I knew;
> Henley himself I've heard, and Budgell too.
> The doctors' wormwood style, the hash of tongues
> A pedant makes, the storm of Gonson's lungs."

The justice wears the look of one in authority, and enters the house of Hogarth's heroine with slow and cautious steps. The portrait of Dr. Sacheverel, the pistols of the highwayman, her "true love," the print of the Virgin Mary, the stolen watches and jewels—these things are so many glimpses into the private life and conversation of the unfortunate.

The fat and lean physicians, who disturb the expiring sinner with their disputes, were well-known characters, who poisoned and slew in their day with more success than attends the most practised quacks of the present generation. The meagre son of Æsculapius was Dr. Misaubin, a foreigner; his corpulent adversary was home-born, and only differed with his brother about the means of conducting their patient to repose and death. They were men well qualified to fulfil the parting words of a witty northern baronet to his son, who was about to proceed into England to practise as a physician. "Go, my son, into the land of the Southron; they will find in thee the avenger of the battle of Pinkie."

The persons who crowd the eight busy scenes of the "Rake's Progress" are not so well known; many are believed to be portraits. The hero himself is probably only the personation of the vices which the painter proposed to satirize; through which the treasures amassed by sordid meanness were to be as ignobly squandered. In the halo round the head of the antiquated beldam, whom he marries to support his extravagance, we see a satiric touch at that spiritual school of painting to which Hogarth never bore any love. The two sedate personages in the scene of the gaming-table are one Manners (of the family of Rutland), to whom the Duke of Devonshire lost the great estate of Leicester Abbey, and a highwayman, who sits warming his feet at the fire, waiting quietly till the winner departs, that he may, with a craped face and a cocked pistol, follow and seize the whole. "Old Manners," says Ireland, "was the only person of his time who amassed a considerable fortune by the profession of a gamester." Hogarth has shown him exercising his twofold avocation of miser and gamester, discounting a note of hand to a nobleman with a greedy hand and a rapacious eye.

In another scene the actors in the drama of prodigality are numerous and well chosen. The rake, holding his morning levée, appears stiff and ungraceful in his rich dress and newly-acquired importance, and is surrounded by visitors well qualified to reduce him from affluence to poverty. Paris sends a tailor, a dancing-master, a milliner, a master of fencing, and a blower of the French horn; we have besides an English prize-fighter, a teacher of Italian music, a garden architect, a bravo, a jockey, and a poet. One of those worthies, Dubois, a Frenchman, was memorable for his enthusiasm in the science of defence, and for having died in a quarrel with an Irishman of his own name and profession, as fiery and skilful as himself. Another was Figg, the prize-fighter, noted in the days of Hogarth for beating half-a-dozen intractable Hibernians, which accounts for the words on the label—"A Figg for the Irish." The teacher of music resembles Handel, and the embellisher of gardens has the look of Bridgman—a person who modestly boasted that his works "created landscape, realized painting, and improved nature." If the subjects which painting embodies could be as clearly described by the pen there would be less use for the pencil; nothing short of the examination of these varied productions can properly satisfy curiosity. "The 'Rake's Levee Room,'" says Walpole, "the 'Nobleman's Dining Room,' the 'Apartments of the Husband and Wife' in 'Marriage à-la-Mode,' the 'Alderman's Parlour,' the 'Bedchamber,' and many others are the history of the manners of the age."

The fame of Hogarth and the profit arising from his pieces, excited needy artists and unprincipled printsellers to engrave some of the most popular of his works, and dispose of them for their own advantage. The eight prints of the "Rake's Progress" were pirated by Boitard, published on one large sheet a fortnight before the originals appeared, and called "The Progress of the Rake, exemplified in the Life of Ramble Gripe, Esq., Son and Heir of Sir Positive Gripe." They were executed, too, with a skill which threatened to impair his income. Hogarth complained with much bitterness of this audacious proceeding; and, to put a stop to such depredations, and secure to painters

generally a fair profit in their own compositions, he applied to Parliament, and obtained an Act in 1735, for recognizing a legal copyright in designs and engravings, and restraining copies of such works from being made without consent of the owners.

A few very plain words, one would have thought, might have expressed this very plain meaning; but in Acts of Parliament the meaning is apt to be lost amidst the multitude of phrases, as a figure is sometimes obscured in the abundance of its drapery. One Huggins, the friend of Hogarth, drew the Act, and worded it so loosely and vaguely, that when resorted to as a remedy in the case of Jeffreys the printseller, it was the opinion of Lord Hardwicke, before whom the trial came on, that no person claiming under an assignment from the original inventor of the paintings or designs copied, could receive any benefit from it. "Hogarth," says Sir John Hawkins, "attended the hearing of the cause, and lamented to me that he had employed Huggins to draw the Act, adding that, when he first projected it, he hoped it would be such an encouragement to art, that engravers would multiply, and the shops of printsellers become as numerous as those of bakers:—a hope (adds Hawkins) which seems pretty nearly gratified."

From his pencil and his graver Hogarth obtained a twofold fame, and a right to a twofold profit—of which he naturally desired to secure the advantages to himself. His paintings, notwithstanding his general reputation, continued, however, low-priced; they were considered more as the corrupted offspring of a random inspiration, than as the legitimate productions of study and art. His graver was to him as a second right hand; he thus multiplied his works by the hundred and by the thousand, increased his income, and established his fame everywhere. Hogarth stood alone here; by holding the graver with his own hand, he communicated to the prints an autograph importance which materially increased their value. Few painters of eminence have engraved their own pictures. Hogarth and Martin—the latter as eminent for splendid imagination in historical landscape as the former for his human

nature—have secured to themselves the value of their works, and gratified purchasers with the certainty of possessing prints which have the merit of being originals rather than copies.

The attention which the Legislature paid to the artist's wishes, in passing his Bill for the encouragement of the arts of designing and engraving, was so much to his satisfaction, that he engraved a small print, with emblematic devices, to commemorate the event. What symbols failed in expressing, he supplied by means of words—and the symbols and the words were both very laudatory. On the top of the plate, Hogarth etched a royal crown, shedding rays on mitres and coronets, on the Great Seal, on the Speaker's hat, and other symbols, indicating the united wisdom of king, lords, and commons. Underneath was written, "In humble and grateful acknowledgement of the grace and goodness of the legislature, manifested in the act of parliament for the encouraging of the arts of designing, engraving, &c., obtained by the endeavours, and almost at the sole expense, of the designer of this print, in 1735; by which, not only the professors of those arts were rescued from the tyranny, frauds, and piracies, of monopolizing dealers, and legally entitled to the fruits of their own labours; but genius and industry were also prompted by the most noble and generous inducements to exert themselves; emulation was excited, ornamental compositions were better understood, and every manufacture, where fancy has any concern, was gradually raised to a pitch of perfection before unknown: insomuch that those of Great Britain are at present the most elegant and the most in esteem in Europe."

Such is the account which Hogarth considerately gave of the works which this Act was framed to protect and encourage. There is something too much of the manufacturer in it, and more than is modest of the personal importance of the artist. Nor has he properly described the works intended to be protected. His own productions are of another order than the "ornamental," and no one but himself has yet ventured to call them elegant. His satiric compositions, like the verses of his uncle "had more effect

on the manners of the people than the sermons of the parish parson"—they were useful, but not ornamental. He calls himself, however, only a designer and engraver—letting the name of painter lie till he should lift it like a banner, and display it on a new field of glory.

In 1736, Hogarth dropped one or two more of his burning satires on the reigning follies of London. "The Sleeping Congregation," in which a heavy parson is promoting, with all the alacrity of dulness, the slumber of a respectable, but singular auditory, is very clever. Similar scenes must arise on the fancy of all who look on this work. Sleep seems to have come over the whole like a cloud. The last who yields is the clerk, a portly man, with a shining face. One of his eyes is closed, and the other is only kept open by a very fine young woman, who is sleeping very earnestly at his left hand. He is conscious of the temptation; his efforts to keep awake are very ludicrous—but it is easy to see that sleep is to be the conqueror. The second design was that of the "Distrest Poet"—a subject half-serious, half-comic. The bard himself is evidently one of those who

> "Strain from hard-bound brains eight lines a year;"

and, though the subject in hand is a gold-mine, inspiration descends slowly. He is as busy with one hand as if the muse could be won by scratching, and holds the pen in the other wet with ink, to note down the tardy and reluctant words. His wife, a sweet-looking, thrifty body, as a poet's spouse requires to be, applies her hands to a certain kind of work which will not disturb with its noise the painful reverie of her husband; she is seeking at the same time to soothe, by mild looks and well-chosen words, the clamour of a milkwoman, who exhibits an unliquidated tally.[1]

In the same year he published two prints, the titles of which I forbear to transcribe, from pictures painted at the request of some vulgar or vicious nobleman. "He repented," says Steevens, "of having engraved them; and

[1] This picture is now in the possession of the Marquis of Westminster. —Ed.

almost every possessor of his works will wish they had been withheld from the public."

"Southwark Fair"—another early work, but for which there is no certain date,[1] is one of his most elaborate performances. It is, however, too crowded, too busy, and too extensive, and wants, what all his other works have, that central point of attraction round which all lesser and subordinate things should revolve. It exhibits a lively image of the noisy hurly-burly scenes in which our ancestors loved to indulge, and in which the gentry and nobles mingled without fear or alarm. Some sixty years ago the fields around a village fair were filled with the carriages of people of rank and condition, and noblemen, with their wives and daughters, mixed in the crowd, and kept, by their presence, the rustic part of the visitors in subordination. With this less graphic portion of the show, Hogarth has not meddled. Strolling players, fire-eaters, jugglers—

> ". . . . Katterfelto, with his hair on end,
> At his own wonders wondering for his bread"—

simple-faced countrymen, nimble pickpockets, and ladies with roguish eyes, are the actors who fill his stage. One of the most successful characters is that of the strutting Amazon in a hat and feather, the sole heroine in a gang of hedge comedians beating up for an audience. On this patched, painted, and buskined beauty, two clowns are staring their senses away in gaping ecstasy of enjoyment.

Of "Modern Midnight Conversation," which famous piece we now come to, it is said by Ireland that most of the figures were portraits. This is likely; but nothing can exceed the drunken joyousness of this assembly. Around a table some dozen persons are, or have been, seated, and upon them strong wine and brandy punch have done their good offices. They are talking, swearing, singing, falling, sleeping, smoking, swilling, and huzzaing with a spirit which life alone can rival. A parson, the high priest of these festivities, personifies the satire of Thomson,

[1] An advertisement which appeared in the "Craftsman" fixes the date of "Southwark Fair" as 1733.—A. C.

and sits "a black abyss of drink." His intellects and power of swallow survive amidst the general wreck of his companions: with a pipe in one hand and a corkscrew in the other, which he uses as a tobacco-stopper, he still presides with suitable gravity,

"And to mere mortals seems a priest in drink."

Sir John Hawkins says this divine is Henley the orator, the victim of Pope; but, according to Mrs. Piozzi, he is no other than Parson Ford,[1] a near relative of Dr. Johnson, and famous in his day for profligacy.

[1] *Parson Ford.* Hereby hangs a tale—and on this subject we have obtained, through the intrepidity of Boswell, Johnson's own opinion; it is very curious. "Parson Ford, sir, was my acquaintance and relation, my mother's nephew. He had purchased a living in the country, but not simoniacally. I never saw him but in the country. I have been told he was a man of great parts: very profligate; but I never heard he was impious." Boswell—"Was there not a story of his ghost having appeared?" Johnson—"Sir, it was believed. A waiter at the Hummums, in which house Ford died, had been absent for some time, and returned, not knowing that Ford was dead. Going down to the cellar, according to the story, he met him; going down again he met him a second time. When he came up, he asked some of the people of the house what Ford could be doing there. They told him that Ford was dead. The waiter took a fever, in which he lay for some time. When he recovered, he said he had a message to deliver to some woman from Ford; but he was not to tell what or to whom. He walked out; he was followed; but somewhere about St. Paul's they lost him. He came back and said he had delivered the message, and the woman exclaimed that we are all undone. Dr. Pellett, who was not a credulous man, inquired into the truth of this story, and he said the evidence was irresistible."

Of Henley the orator, who shares with Ford the reputation of supplying the tippling parson to Hogarth's design, the following characteristic story is related:—Henley was drinking in the Grecian Coffee House, in company of a friend, when he was heard to say, "Pray, what is become of our old acquaintance, Dick Smith? I have not seen him for years." Friend—"I really don't know: the last time I heard of him he was at Ceylon, or some other of our West India settlements." Henley—"Ceylon, sir? you have made two mistakes; Ceylon is not one of our settlements, and is in the East Indies, not the West." Friend—"That I deny." Henley—"The more shame for you; every boy eight years old knows the truth of what I say." Friend—"Well, well, be it as you will. Thank God, I know very little about these sort of things." Henley—"What! you thank God for your ignorance, do you?" Friend—"I do, sir; what then?" Henley—"You have much to be thankful for."

The merry group, among whom the reverend gentleman is seated, have emptied twenty-three flasks, and the twenty-fourth is decanting. Even the timepiece seems infected with the fume of the liquor, for the hour and minute hands do not agree. In justification of the propriety of giving the priest a corkscrew, the following anecdote was related by Lord Sandwich:—"I was in a company where there were ten parsons, and I made a wager privately—and won it—that among them there was not one prayer-book. I then offered to lay another wager, that among the ten parsons there were half a score of corkscrews—it was accepted; the butler received his instructions, pretended to break his corkscrew, and requested any gentleman to lend him one, when each priest pulled a corkscrew from his pocket." This print has carried the name of Hogarth into the remotest lands. It is considered in France and Germany the best of all his single works.

The next work of Hogarth was "The Enraged Musician." This sensitive mortal, by the frogs on his coat, appears to be a Frenchman; and by the splendour of his dress, and grandeur of his house, we at once see that he is one of those successful performers who, with better fortune than Glasgerion, who harped fish out of the water, succeed in fiddling the gold out of misers' pockets. To perplex and distress the refined ear of this delicate Monsieur, the artist has assailed him with such a mixture and uproar of vexatious sounds as defies one to contemplate. It seems impossible to increase his annoyance by the addition of any other din, save the braying of an ass, which Cowper says is the only unmusical sound in *nature*. "This strange scene," said a wit of the day, "deafens one to look at."

"This design," says Ireland, "originated in a story which was told to Hogarth by Mr. John Festin, who is the hero of the print. He was eminent for his skill in playing upon the hautboy and German flute, and much employed as a teacher of music. To each of his scholars he dedicated one hour each day." "At nine o'clock one morning," said he, "I waited upon my Lord Spencer, but his lordship being out of town, from him I went to Mr. V——n, now Lord

V——n; it was so early that he was not arisen. I went into his chamber, and opening a window sat down on the window seat. Before the rails was a fellow playing upon the hautboy. A man with a barrow full of onions offered the piper an onion if he would play him a tune; that ended, he offered a second for a second tune; the same for a third, and was going on; but this was too much—I could not bear it—it angered my very soul. Zounds, said I, stop here! This fellow is ridiculing my profession—he is playing on the hautboy for onions!"

In the spirit of this story the artist has gone to work. Of vocal performers there is the dustman, shouting "Dust, ho! dust, ho!" the wandering fishmonger, calling, "Flounders!" a milkmaid crying, "Milk above! milk below!" a female ballad-singer, chanting the doleful story of the "Lady's Fall"—her child and a neighbouring parrot screaming the chorus; a little French drummer beats "rub-a-dub, rub-a-dub," without remorse, singing all the time; two cats squall and puff in the gutter tiles; a dog is howling in dismay; while like a young demon, overlooking and inspiring all, a sweep-boy, with nothing un-black about him save his teeth and the whites of his eyes, proclaims that his work is done—from the top of a chimney-pot. Of instrumental accompaniments there is good store. A postman with his horn, a stroller with his hautboy, a dustman with his bell, a paviour with his rammer, a cutler grinding a butcher's cleaver; and "John Long, Pewterer," over a door, adds the clink of twenty hammers striking on metal to the medley of out-of-door sounds.

The following advertisement in the "Daily London Post" for November, 1740, fixes the date of this amusing production. "Shortly will be published a New Print, called the 'Provoked Musician,' designed and engraved by William Hogarth; being the companion to a print representing a Distrest Poet, published some time since. To which will be added a third, on Painting, which will complete the set; but as this subject may turn upon an affair depending between the Right Hon. the Lord Mayor and the author, it may be retarded for some time." What the affair pending between Hogarth and the city was, no

one has informed us. Parsons was at that time Lord Mayor.

The "Four Times of the Day," in four prints, were the next works which appeared.[1] "In the 'Progress of the Harlot' and the 'Adventures of the Rake,' Hogarth displayed," says Ireland, "his powers as a painter of moral history; in the 'Four Times of the Day' he treads poetic ground."

He treads London streets, and finds his materials in its follies. The first scene is called "Morning." The sun is newly risen, and there is snow on the housetops. An old maiden lady, prim, withered, miserly, and morose, is walking to church, with a starved and shivering footboy bearing her prayer-book. A more than common sourness is in her look; for she sees, as if she saw them not, two fuddled beaux from Tom King's Coffee-house earnestly caressing two of the daughters of folly. The remains of a night-fire glimmer on the pavement; a young girl with a fruit-basket is warming her hands, while a beggar-woman, her companion, is soliciting charity in vain from the lady who is on her way to church. The door of Tom King's Coffee-house is filled with a crowd of drunken and riotous companions. Swords, cudgels, and all such missiles as hasty anger picks up, are employed—and the strife grows fast and furious. Snow on the ground and icicles at the eaves are a chilling prospect; but to suit the season and the scene there is an open shop where liquor is sold; and to meet disease there is the flying physician, Doctor Rock, expatiating to a motley and marvelling audience on the miracles wrought by his medicine, which he dispenses, as his sign-post shows, by letters-patent. It is said that the old maiden in this print was the portrait of a lady, who was so incensed at the satire that she struck Hogarth out of her will; she was pleased at first, for the resemblance was strong, till some good-natured friend explained it in a way injurious to the fortune of the artist. Churchill, the poet, deprived himself of a legacy in a similar way, by singing of

[1] Sala says that the designs for these prints were made for the decoration of Vauxhall, but I cannot find any confirmation of his statement.—Ed.

"Famed Vine Street,
Where heaven, the kindest wish of man to grant,
Gave me an old house and an older aunt."

Tom King's Coffee-house was famed for riots and dissipation. The proprietor, Mrs. Moll King, the relict of Thomas, was well acquainted with the magistrates, and suffered in purse, and also in her person, for keeping a disorderly house. Retiring from business, and that bad eminence the pillory, to the hill of Hampstead, she lived on her early gains, paid for a pew in church, was charitable at appointed seasons, and died in peace in 1747.

The second scene is "Noon." A crowd of people are coming from church—an affected Frenchwoman, with a fop of a husband and an indulged child, are foremost. A servant girl, returning with a pie from the baker's, is stopped by a blackamoor, and from the alacrity with which her cheek and his lips come together, they may be considered as old acquaintances: both victuals and virtue, however, seem in some danger. The most natural portion of the picture is where the poor boy, in placing hastily a baked pudding on the head of a post to rest himself, has broken the dish and scattered the contents. His mouth is gaping in misery, his eyes are shut, yet running over with tears, and he is scratching his head in a ludicrous agony which surpasses description. A poor, half-famished child is devouring some of the smoking fragments. "The scene is laid," says Ireland, "at the door of a French Chapel in Hog Lane, a part of the town at that time almost wholly peopled by French refugees or their descendants. The congregation is exclusively French, and the ludicrous saluting of the two withered beldams is national. By the dial of St. Giles's Church we see that it is only half-past eleven. At this early hour, in those good times, there was as much good eating as there is now at six o'clock in the evening. From twenty pewter measures hanging on the wall, it would seem that good drinking too was considered worthy of attention."

The third is "Afternoon," and the hour five o'clock. The foreground is occupied by a husband and wife walking out to enjoy the air. What the painter intended the former should be taken for may be guessed by the relative

position in which his head and the horns of a neighbouring cow are placed: as for his partner, she is so portly, so proud, so swollen with spite, and saturated with venom, that Hogarth has evidently collected into her looks the malice and the poison of a whole district of false and domineering wives. She is fatigued too with the walk, angry with she knows not what, and obviously looking out for a victim worthy of her wrath. The scene is laid on the bank of the New River, near Sadler's Wells, and includes a public-house, with the head of Sir Hugh Middleton on its sign-post—the only memorial, by the way, which London ever raised to the memory of that spirited person. He was an opulent goldsmith, and beggared himself by an undertaking which gave pure water to the city, and wealth to many of those who took up his speculation after him.

The fourth scene is "Night." It was the practice at that time to kindle fires openly in the public streets on occasions of rejoicing; and, as this was the twenty-ninth of May, boughs of oak were stuck over signs, and wreathed in the hats of the merry spirits of the hour. London seems to be reeling with intoxication. In the Freemason, staggering home from the tavern assisted by a waiter, Hogarth is supposed to have satirized Sir Thomas de Veel; Sir John Hawkins, indeed, says that he could discover no such resemblance—but the resemblance probably lay less in the person than in the practice of Sir John's brother-justice. Magistrate or not, a city Xantippe is showering a midnight favour upon him from a window. "The Salisbury Flying Coach, oversetting and broken by passing through the bonfire, is said," observes Ireland, "to be an intended burlesque upon a right honourable peer, who was accustomed to drive his own carriage over hedges and rivers, and has been sometimes known to drive three or four of his maid-servants into a deep water, and there leave them in the coach to shift for themselves." The practical fun of this facetious peer has been imitated in more modern times. On the whole, "Night" scarcely satisfies expectation—indeed it falls considerably below the excellence of its companions; grouping more varied, and a scene richer in satiric touches, were expected from the hand of one

whose fault lay not in the scantiness but in the excess of materials. The Duke of Ancaster purchased the first two of these pictures for seventy-five guineas; and the remaining pair were sold to Sir William Heathcote for forty-six.[1]

The next production was the "Strolling Actresses," one of the most imaginative and amusing of all the works of Hogarth. In a huge barn, fitted up like a theatre, the invention of the artist has assembled such a company of performers as never before or since met to dress, rehearse, and prepare themselves for the amusement of mankind. The "Devil to Pay in Heaven" is the play they are preparing to exhibit—a rustic drama, invented to ridicule those Religious Mysteries which so long kept possession of the stage, and which, in the times of the Romish Church, were under the direction of the clergy. Such is the common account; and such might have been the aim of the satirist—but the scene seems better calculated to ridicule the ornamental painters of those days, who filled parlours and halls with mobs of the heathen divinities.

The dramatis personæ are principally ancient deities, and these of the first order. The names of Jupiter, Juno, Diana, Apollo, Flora, Night, Syren, Aurora, and Cupid figure on the playbill; and these personages are accompanied by a ghost, two eagles, two dragons, two kittens, and an aged monkey. Juno is sitting on an old wheelbarrow, which serves occasionally for a triumphal car; she stretches out one leg, raises her right hand, and rehearses her part; while Night, dressed in a starry robe, is mending her stocking. The Star of Evening, which rises over the head of Night, is a scoured tin-mould used in making tarts. A veteran damsel with one eye, and a dagger fixed

[1] Concerning the prints of these pictures George Faulkner thus writes from Dublin: "Mr. Delany tells me that you are going to publish more prints. Your reputation is sufficiently known to recommend any thing of yours, and I shall be glad to serve you. You may send me fifty sets, providing you take back what I cannot sell. I have often the pleasure of drinking your health with Dr. Swift, who is a great admirer of yours, and hath made mention of you in his poems with great honour, and desired me to thank you for your kind present, and to accept of his service."

in her mantle by way of skewer, represents the Tragic Muse; she is cutting a cat's tail to obtain blood for some solemn purpose, and grins well pleased as it drops into the broken dish. Two little devils, with horns just budded, are contesting the right to a pot of ale, out of which one of them is drinking lustily; the pot had occupied a Grecian altar, on which lies a loaf of bread—beside a tobacco-pipe, about whose orifice a slight smoke still lingers.

The centre of the design is occupied by Diana, stripped to her chemise. The inspiration of her part had come upon her as she prepared to dress; one foot rests on her unappropriated hoop, her head is stuck full of flowers and feathers, and she rehearses her speech with more enthusiasm of look than modesty of manner. She is unlike her companions—she is young, blooming, and beautiful. Flora is seated at her toilet, and it would wrong her looks to say that she had no need of it. Her toilet is a wicker basket, which contains the regalia of the company; she smooths her hair with a piece of candle, holds the dredger ready, and casts her eye on a broken looking-glass, apparently with some satisfaction. Apollo and Cupid are endeavouring to bring down a pair of stockings, hung out to dry on a cloud; but the wings of the God of Love are unable to raise him, and he has recourse to a ladder. Aurora sits on the ground, with the Morning Star among her hair; she is in the service of the Syren, who offers to Ganymede a glass of gin, which he gladly accepts in the hope of curing an aching tooth. The Sho, who personates the Bird of Jove, is feeding her child; a regal crown holds the saucepan stuffed with pap; the child, frightened by the enormous beak of the eagle, is crying lustily. In a corner a monkey in a long cloak, a bag wig, and solitaire, is moistening the plumed helmet of Alexander the Great.

There is no limit to the drollery. One kitten touches an old lyre with apparent skill—another rolls an imperial orb; cups and balls are there, to intimate the sleight-of-hand pursuits of the company; and, as a moral remonstrance, two judges' wigs and an empty noose are near. A mitre, filled with tragedies and farces, and a dark lantern, are placed on a pulpit cushion.

The wit, the humour, and amusing absurdities of this performance are without end. Into the darkest nook the artist has put meaning, and there is instruction or sarcasm in all that he has introduced. There is such a display of the tinsel wealth and the symbols of vulgar enjoyment of the strolling community—such a ludicrous intermixture of heaven with things of the earth earthy, and such a contrast of situations and characters, that the eye is never wearied, for the mind is ever employed. It would be unfair not to note that a hen has found a roost for her chickens and herself on a set of unemployed waves, which are manufactured to perform the part of a storm at sea; and that materials are collected for fabricating that identical kind of dramatic thunder of which John Dennis was the inventor and maker. The bill assures us that this is positively the *last performance* of the diabolical drama *in this place:* the barn, therefore, instead of ringing with comic mirth or with tragic distress, is destined in future to re-echo only the sound of the flail and fanners. This wondrous picture was sold to Francis Beckford, Esq., for £27 6*s.*: he thought the price too much, and returned it to the painter, who afterwards disposed of it to Mr. Wood, of Littleton, for the same price. The genius of Hogarth was frequently obliged to bow to the parsimony of the rich and the presumption of the ignorant.[1]

Hogarth was now in his forty-eighth year: his fame was established; he was rich enough to maintain a carriage; and though brother artists conceded to him the name of painter with whimsical reluctance, he was everywhere received with the respect and honour due to a man of high talents and uncommon attainments. Success seldom teaches humility: it wrought no material change in Hogarth. When a poor student he displayed the same firmness of purpose in his pursuits, and defended his adherence to the dramatic species of painting (which he invented) with

[1] This admirable picture was, unfortunately, destroyed in a fire that took place at Littleton House, near Staines, on the 18th of December, 1874. The painter's receipt for the purchase-money was attached to it, by which it appeared that it was painted for Mr. Wood, for the sum of twenty-five guineas. It is stated to have been insured for £1,000.—Ed.

the same warmth, decision, and enthusiasm, which characterized him now. Throughout his life his pursuits and his opinions were the same. He imagined a new national style of composition; and to this he adhered from youth to age; for the short periods devoted to portrait-painting cannot be considered as any abandonment of his original purpose—but only as sacrifices to necessity.

Hogarth supported himself by the sale of his prints: the prices of his paintings kept pace neither with his fame nor with his expectations. He knew, however, the passion of his countrymen for novelty—how they love to encourage whatever is strange and mysterious; and, hoping to profit by these feelings, the artist determined to sell his principal paintings by an auction of a very singular nature.

On the 25th of January, 1745, he offered for sale the six paintings of the "Harlot's Progress," the eight paintings of the "Rake's Progress," the "Four Times of the Day," and the "Strolling Actresses," on the following conditions:—

1. Every bidder shall have an entire leaf numbered in the book of sale, on the top of which will be entered his name and place of abode, the sum paid by him, the time when, and for which picture.

2. That on the day of sale, a clock striking every five minutes shall be placed in the room; and when it hath struck five minutes after twelve, the first picture mentioned in the sale-book shall be deemed as sold; the second picture, when the clock hath struck the next five minutes after twelve, and so on in succession till the whole nineteen pictures are sold.

3. That none advance less than gold at each bidding.

4. No person to bid on the last day, except those whose names were before entered in the book. As Mr. Hogarth's room is but small, he begs the favour that no persons, except those whose names are entered in the book, will come to view his paintings on the last day of sale.

This plan was new, startling—and unproductive. It was probably planned to prevent biddings by proxy, and to secure to the artist the price which men of wealth and rank might be induced to offer publicly for works of ge-

nius. "A method so novel," observes Ireland, "probably disgusted the town; they might not exactly understand this tedious formula of entering their names and places of abode in a book open to indiscriminate inspection; they might wish to humble an artist who, by his proposals, seemed to consider that he did the world a favour in suffering them to bid for his works; or the rage for paintings might be confined to the admirers of the old masters; be that as it may, he received only four hundred and twenty-seven pounds seven shillings for his nineteen pictures—a price by no means equal to their merit. The prints of the 'Harlot's Progress' had sold much better than those of the Rake's, yet the paintings of the former produced only fourteen guineas each, while those of the latter were sold for twenty-two. That admirable picture, 'Morning,' brought twenty guineas, and 'Night,' in every respect inferior to almost any of his works, six-and-twenty." Such was the reward, then, to which the patrons of genius thought these works entitled. More has been since given, over and over again, for a single painting, than Hogarth obtained for all his paintings put together.

The coldness of the town and the reserve of wealthy purchasers, however, may have arisen, in part at least, from another cause than the singularity of the mode of sale. The wit and humour of Hogarth were ever ready to flow out; and here, unfortunately for his profit, he sent forth his satire in the shape of a card of admission to his sale. This production—which, among the lovers of art, has obtained the name of the "Battle of the Pictures"—is still more singular than his plan of auction; he seemed resolved never to do an ordinary thing in a common way. As he had not spared his speech in ridicule of those who thought all beauty and excellence were contained in the old religious paintings, so neither did he feel disposed to spare them when the subject came fairly before his pencil.

It is no easy matter to describe with accuracy this curious card. On the ground are placed three rows of paintings from the foreign school—one row of the "Bull and Europa"—another of "Apollo flaying Marsyas"—and a third of "St. Andrew on the Cross." There are hun-

dreds of each, to denote the system of copyism and imposture which had filled the country with imitations and caricatures. Above them is an unfurled flag, emblazoned with an auctioneer's hammer; while a cock, on the summit of the sale-room, with the motto "p-u-f-s," represents Cocks, the auctioneer, and the mode by which he disposed of those simulated productions. On the right hand, in the open air, are exposed to sale the principal pictures of Hogarth, and against them, as if moved by some miraculous wind, the pictures of the old school are driven into direct collision. The foreign works seem the aggressors—the havoc is mutual and equal. A "Saint Francis" has penetrated, in a very ludicrous way, into Hogarth's "Morning" —a "Mary Magdalen" has successfully intruded herself into the third scene of the "Harlot's Progress," and the splendid saloon scene in "Marriage-à-la-Mode" suffers severely by the "Aldobrandini Marriage." "Thus far," as Ireland observes, "the battle is in favour of the ancients; but the aërial combat has a different termination;—for by the riotous scene in the 'Rake's Progress' a hole is made in Titian's 'Feast of Olympus,' and a 'Bacchanalian,' by Rubens, shares the same fate from 'Modern Midnight Conversation.'"

Having sold his nineteen favourite pictures at a price which must have stung his proud spirit, he imagined and executed a new series of moral, instructive, and satiric paintings. These are the six scenes of "Marriage-à-la-Mode." That he thought very well of this new series, is countenanced by the circumstance of his making the saloon scene one of the combatants in the "Battle of the Pictures," though it had not been exposed to sale at the time, nor even engraved. They show the same command of character, the same knowledge of human life, the same skill in grouping, the same art of uniting many different parts into one clear consistent story—the same satiric force and dramatic detail which characterize his best productions. They also show the same undaunted spirit in grappling with human depravity. The victim is higher—the sacrificing weapon is the same.

Of this work Dr. Shebbeare formed a novel, called the

"Marriage Act," and the author of the "Clandestine Marriage" found the story of his drama in its scenes. Our artist gave the following intimation of its appearance in the "London Daily Post" of April 7th, 1743:—"Mr. Hogarth intends to publish by subscription six plates, from copper-plates engraved by the best masters in Paris, after his own paintings—the heads, for the better preservation of the characters and expressions, to be done by the author—representing a variety of modern occurrences in high life, and called 'Marriage-à-la-Mode.' Particular care is taken that the whole shall not be liable to any exception on account of *indecency or inelegancy;* and that none of the characters represented shall be personal." Hogarth seldom sought to conceal either his pleasure or his vexation—his feelings flowed into his advertisements as well as into his conversation. He alludes to the charges which his enemies were ever ready to bring against him, of grossness and personality—and it is evident that he cares very little for their censures.

The first scene of this series represents the preparations for marriage between the daughter of a rich citizen and the son and heir of a proud old peer. The bride's father, a prudent, sordid man, cares little for the bridegroom's ancient pedigree, which is satirically exhibited as issuing out of the mailed lions of the Bastard of Normandy—but he respects the ample securities which the aged nobleman lays before him. The young lord, a fop in his dress and something of a fool in his looks, gazes at his person in the glass, and practises with his snuff-box infinitely more to his own satisfaction than to that of his *intended*—who turns half from him in scorn—plays with her wedding-ring, and listens, as much as offended pride will allow, to the words of Mr. Silvertongue, a smooth and insinuating lawyer. Beside them there are two spaniels, coupled contrary to their inclinations, and pulling different ways—symbolical of the happiness to be expected from the approaching union.

Of the other five pictures of the series, a less particular description may serve; their story of domestic misery is neither involved nor mysterious. The peer sought wealth

23492

for his son, the citizen rank for his daughter—and so two vain, giddy, and extravagant young persons are united. Dissensions forthwith ensue. My lord runs a career of extravagance and dissipation, neglects his wife, and associates with gamblers, spendthrifts, and courtesans. My lady resents the coldness and neglect of her husband, listens too much to the eloquence of the lawyer, frequents the gaming-tables of people of rank, and impairs by degrees her fortune and her reputation. At length, in the midst of a heartless scene, where outlandish fiddlers and singers, and other expensive consumers of time, are assembled—where my Lord some-one listens to their music in joy, and my Lady—I have forgotten her name—faints with ecstasy—the heroine of "Marriage-à-la-Mode" consents to a meeting at a masquerade; and we see her no more till she appears kneeling in her night-dress, in a bagnio, before her injured husband, who has just received a mortal thrust from the sword of her seducer. The change is indeed sudden; but from splendour to misery the way is often short enough, and from innocence to guilt there is but a step. The concluding scene is in the house of the lady's father:—her husband had been *murdered:* the last dying speech of her paramour lies at her feet—she ought not, nor does she seek, to live. The unfortunate empties a phial of laudanum, and expires—her only child twines its little arms round her neck, and the sordid old father carefully removes a costly ring from her finger. Such is the outline of a dramatic story which it would require a volume to describe;—so great, so various, and so lavish is its wealth of satire and pathos—with such waste of ornament, such overflowing knowledge of life, nature, and manners, has Hogarth emblazoned this domestic tragedy. The world rewarded these works with immediate approbation; many sets of the engravings were sold; and the artist announced the original paintings for sale in the public papers.

Hogarth had long waged war with tongue, with pen, and with pencil, against the opulent tribe of picture-dealers, and all those who aided in the introduction of copies of foreign masters to the injury of the native school. Such unremitting hostility seems to have suited the temper, as

much as it gratified the pride, of the painter; and though he sometimes experienced sharp retorts and suffered a little in the fracas, he had the supreme satisfaction of making his opponents ridiculous. In his advertisement for the sale of the "Marriage-à-la-Mode," in 1750, the following characteristic passage occurs:—"As, according to the standard so righteously and so laudably established, by picture-dealers, picture-cleaners, picture-frame makers, and other connoisseurs, the works of a painter are to be esteemed more or less valuable as they are more or less scarce, and as the living painter is most of all affected by the inferences resulting from this, and other considerations equally candid and edifying, Mr. Hogarth, by way of precaution, not puff, begs leave to urge, that probably this will be the last sale of pictures he may ever exhibit, because of the difficulty of vending such a number at once to any tolerable advantage, and that the whole number he has already exhibited, of the historical or humorous kind, does not exceed fifty; of which the three sets called the 'Harlot's Progress,' the 'Rake's Progress,' and that now to be sold, make twenty; so that, whoever has a taste of his own to rely on, and is not too squeamish, and has courage enough to own it by daring to give them a place in a collection till Time, the supposed finisher, but real destroyer of paintings, has rendered them fit for those more sacred repositories where schools, names, heads, masters, &c., attain their last stage of preferment, may from hence be convinced that multiplicity at least of his, Mr. Hogarth's, pieces, will be no diminution of their value."

This is petulant enough, and in very indifferent taste. His strange advertisements, and still stranger plans of sale, stirred up the spirit of the town against him, and the result is thus related by Mr. Lane, who unexpectedly became the public purchaser of the "Marriage-à-la-Mode." "The sale was to take place by a kind of auction, where every bidder was to write on a ticket the price he was disposed to give, with his name subscribed to it. These papers were to be received by Mr. Hogarth for the space of one month, and the highest bidder at twelve o'clock on the last day of the month was to be the purchaser. This strange mode of

proceeding probably disobliged the public, and there seemed to be at that time a combination against Hogarth, who, perhaps from the frequent and extraordinary approbation of his works, might have imbibed some degree of vanity, which the town in general, friends and foes, seemed resolved to mortify. If this was the case, and to me it was fully apparent, they fully effected their design; for on the 6th of June, 1750, which was to decide the fate of this capital work, when I arrived at the Golden Head, expecting, as was the case at the sale of the 'Harlot's Progress,' to find his study full of noble and great personages, I only found Hogarth and his friend Dr. Parsons, secretary to the Royal Society.[1] I had bid £110; no one arrived; and ten minutes before twelve, I told the artist I would make the pounds guineas. The clock struck, and Mr. Hogarth wished me joy of my purchase, hoping it was an agreeable one; I said perfectly so. Dr. Parsons was very much disturbed, and Hogarth very much disappointed, and truly with great reason. The former told me the painter had hurt himself by naming so early an hour for the sale, and Hogarth, who overheard him, said, in a marked tone and manner, 'Perhaps it may be so.' I concurred in the same opinion, said he was poorly rewarded for his labour, and, if he chose, he might have till three o'clock to find a better bidder. Hogarth warmly accepted the offer, and Dr. Parsons proposed to make it public. I thought this unfair, and forbade it. 'At one o'clock,' Hogarth said, 'I shall trespass no longer on your generosity; you are the proprietor, and, if you are pleased with the purchase, I am abundantly so with the purchaser.' He then desired me to promise that I would not dispose of the paintings without informing him, nor permit any person to meddle with them under pretence of cleaning them, as he always desired to do that himself."

[1] The artist, some one informed Nichols, on the morning of this mortifying day, put on his best wig, strutted away one hour, and fretted away two more, muttering as he moved up and down, "No picture-dealer shall be allowed to bid." There is little in this—it is proper for a man to dress well when he expects good company—and Hogarth had a very proper hatred for picture-dealers.

The excellence of these six noble pictures was acknowledged by the whole nation, and they were in frames worth four guineas each; yet no one felt them to be worth more than ninety pounds six shillings.[1]

Well might the proud heart of Hogarth be stung as he closed this memorable sale. He knew how opulent the land was, and how lavish of its wealth to the impostor, the mountebank, and the cheat. On Farinelli, the Italian singer, for one night's performance in the Opera of "Artaxerxes," the nobles of England showered more riches than would have purchased all the productions which Hogarth ever painted. Gold boxes, diamond rings, diamond buckles, &c., came in such abundance, that the vain creature exclaimed, "There is but one God and one Farinelli." "The sums lavished," says Ireland, "upon exotic warblers, would have paid an army; the applause bestowed upon some of them would have turned the brain of a saint. It was little short of adoration."

Hogarth projected a corresponding series of paintings under the name of the "Happy Marriage," and made some progress in the designs. He had, indeed, gone so far as to sketch out the whole six scenes in colours; and Steevens, holding the pen in Nichols's anecdotes, gives us a description of them which he obtained from a gentleman whom the painter had indulged with a hasty glance:—"The time supposed was immediately after the return of the parties from church; and the scene lay in the hall of an antiquated country mansion. On one side the new-married couple were represented sitting. Behind them was a group of their

[1] Colonel Cawthorne, who inherited them from Lane, sold them to Angerstein for £1,381, in the year 1797.

Every one knows this magnificent series of paintings, which now hang in the National Gallery, having been purchased with the rest of the Angerstein collection, in 1824. In them Hogarth's powers as a colourist are seen more strikingly than in any of his other works, except, perhaps, in the "March to Finchley," which is a masterwork of brilliant and yet thoroughly harmonious colouring. Allan Cunningham scarcely does justice to Hogarth's powers as a painter, for although he does not agree with Walpole "that as a *painter* Hogarth has slender merit," yet while extolling his pictorial qualities, he fails to point out that, simply as a painter—*i.e.* a master of the art of laying colours—Hogarth holds no insignificant position.—Ed.

young friends, of both sexes, in the act of breaking the bride-cake over their heads. In front appeared the father of the young lady grasping a bumper, and drinking with a seeming roar of exultation, to the future happiness of her and her husband. By his side was a table covered with refreshments. Under the screen of the hall several rustic musicians in grotesque attitudes, together with servants and tenants, were arranged. Through the arch by which the room was entered, the eye was led along the passage into the kitchen, which afforded a glimpse of sacerdotal luxury. Before the dripping-pan stood a well-fed divine in his gown and cassock, with his watch in his hand, giving directions to a cook, dressed all in white, who was employed in basting a haunch of venison."

This work, which bore the promise of great excellence, and also of great moral value, was never finished; and why the artist discontinued his labour it is now in vain to inquire. If wedded life could not supply him, as Steevens absurdly and injuriously supposes, with six successive images of domestic happiness, he was truly an unfortunate man. That the painter's own marriage-bed was unblessed with children is true; but surely the absence of children does not imply the absence of all that is picturesque in human enjoyment. If it were so—Hogarth had many friends more fortunate in this respect than himself; and, for an imagination such as his, it could have been no hard task to endow his wedded pair with a progeny worthy of the patriarchs. Nor is wedded felicity necessarily made up of continual seriousness, grave admonitions, examples of regular conduct, and precepts of wisdom and prudence. It embraces enough of mirth, enough of folly, enough of humour, to have mingled well with the austere composure, and meek affection, and graver duties of domestic life—and to have formed a work of the picturesque kind which Steevens desired, and which Hogarth excelled in. We may seek some other cause than want of proper materials for the abandonment of this design.

A work of a less important character came across his fancy. He had been an apprentice, and witnessed the various ways in which the youth of London wasted or improved their time. He was aware of the allurements which tempt boys

to idleness, and knew from experience how necessary industry is to obtain success in any pursuit of profit and honour. Under the influence of these feelings, he conceived and etched his twelve scenes of alternate "Industry and Idleness," and in 1747 gave them to the world. Their aim was better than their execution; for, from a wish to render them popular amongst those whose purses were light, and whose condition needed them most, he made the size of his prints moderate and the price low. Hogarth thus modestly announces his object and his work:—"'Industry and Idleness' exemplified in the conduct of two fellow 'prentices; where one, by taking good courses, and pursuing points for which he was apprenticed, becomes a valuable man, and an ornament to his country: the other, by giving way to idleness, naturally falls into poverty, and ends fatally, as expressed in the last print." The thrifty citizens of London welcomed these works warmly, and hung them in public and private places as guides and examples to their children and dependents. They are not equal in character to many of the works of the artist; but they are plain, natural, and impressive scenes, and fulfil the purpose of the moral painter.

Hogarth met Lord Lovat at St. Albans, on his way to the Tower and the scaffold, and painted his portrait. "I took this likeness," said the artist, "when Simon Frazer was relating on his fingers the numbers of the rebel forces —such a chieftain had so many men, &c. He received me with much cordiality—embraced me as I entered, and kissed me, though he was under the hands of a barber. The muscles of his neck appeared of unusual strength—more so than I had ever seen." When the plate was finished, a printseller, of a more liberal nature than Mr. Bowles, offered its weight in gold for it. The impressions could not be taken off so fast as they were wanted, though the rolling press wrought without intermission. It produced at the rate of about twelve pounds per day for several weeks. The brave and wily old chieftain lived like a robber and died like a Roman.

Soon after the peace of Aix-la-Chapelle, Hogarth went into France, to extend his sphere of observation. His

journey was short, and his stay brief. He imagined himself in a land as free as England; began to sketch one of the gates of Calais; was arrested as a spy, and carried before the governor for examination. The offence which he had unwittingly committed was thought serious enough to warrant his immediate transportation to England, and this seems to have been performed in a manner calculated to embitter his feelings. Two guards accompanied him on board, and, after having insolently twirled him round and round on the deck, told him he might proceed on his voyage without further molestation. This circumstance was not calculated to lessen that sturdy, good-humoured sort of dislike which old-fashioned English people even now entertain towards France, and of which Hogarth had his full share. He arrived at Dover deeply incensed; and, as he was of a temper which resented injuries, something sarcastic and bitter was expected from his pencil.

Those persons who went with Hogarth to France, Hayman the painter and Cheere the sculptor, find an excuse for the governor of Calais in the blunt rudeness and uncivil curiosity of their companion. They were witnesses of his conduct, and of his arrest and dismissal. They related on their return that he was displeased, from the first, with the people, with the country, with the houses, and with the fare. All he looked upon was declared to be in bad taste; the houses, he said, were either gilt or befouled; he laughed when he saw a ragged boy; and, at the sight of silk stockings with holes in them, he burst out into very imprudent language. In vain his friends warned him to be more cautious in his remarks; for as Calais swarmed with Scotch and Irish, he was not to imagine that his sarcasms were concealed in his foreign language. He mocked their fears, and ridiculed his companions as the unworthy sons of a free country. This certainly was unadvised and arrogant.

Hogarth sought to avenge the affront he had received by a design called the "Roast Beef of Old England." It was recommended to national prejudice by the tempting name, but it cannot be considered as one of his happy works. The scene is laid at the gate of Calais. A French cook appears staggering under an immense piece of roasted beef; a well-

fed monk stays him to gaze on it, and seems anxious to bless and cut—and a half-starved meagre community of soldiers surround the reeking wonder with looks ridiculously wistful. Hogarth is seated busily sketching the scene, and the hand of a Frenchman is laid on his shoulder, denoting his arrest. There is not much venom in this; such a satire could be invented without much outlay of invention. A man is not necessarily famishing because he eats little roast beef; nor are abstemiousness and cheerfulness under privation very happy subjects of ridicule.[1] I have not heard that any Frenchman was hurt by this national satire. An Englishman felt it more acutely. Pine the painter sat for the portrait of the friar, and hence acquired the name of Father Pine, which he disliked so much that he requested the likeness might be altered. Of his tour in France, Hogarth, it is said, loved not to speak. He scarcely counted that man his friend who alluded to it. He, who had made so many men appear ridiculous, had no wish to seem so himself. He ventured, however, to write in his memorandum book, "The first time an Englishman goes from Dover to Calais, he must be struck with the different face of things at a little distance. A farcical pomp of war, pompous parade of religion, and much bustle with very little business. To sum up all, poverty, slavery, and innate insolence, covered with an affectation of politeness, give you even here a true picture of the manners of the whole nation. The friars are dirty, sleek, and solemn; the soldiery are lean, ragged, and tawdry; and, as to the fishwomen, their faces are absolute leather."

A painting of a serious character escaped from his hand during the pressure of more engrossing engagements —the "Presentation of young Moses to the daughter of Pharaoh." It appeared in 1751. There is an air of serene and simple dignity about it, which is some relief to the scenes of boisterous humour and moral reproof of his other performances. The original was presented to the Found-

[1] The figure of his half-starved French sentinel has since been copied at the top of our printed advertisements for recruits—a well-fed English soldier stands opposite. The appeal had probably some effect, for it has often been repeated.—A. C.

ling Hospital. The receipt for the print of his work was nearly as valuable as the print itself. It is a "St. Paul before Felix," designed in the Dutch style; nothing can surpass it for broad humour. The saint stands and harangues on a three-footed stool; and such is the power of his eloquence, that the Roman more than trembles—witness the compressed nostrils of his companions;—a Jew, with flashing eyes and a ready knife, surveys his expected victim, while a little sooty devil, with a malicious eye and white teeth, saws away one of the feet from the Apostle's stool.[1] Sir Robert Strange, in his "Inquiry into the Rise and Establishment of the Royal Academy," says, that the donations made by painters of their works to the Foundling Hospital, led to the idea of those exhibitions which now prove so lucrative at Somerset House. Hogarth was the first and most extensive of all these benefactors.

The "Four Stages of Cruelty" was his next work—and I wish it never had been painted. There is indeed great skill in the grouping, and profound knowledge of character; but the whole effect is gross, brutal, and revolting. A savage boy grows into a savage man, and concludes a career of cruelty and outrage by an atrocious murder, for which he is hanged and dissected. The commencement is painful; and the conclusion can scarcely be looked upon save by men practised in surgery, or the shambles.

The "March of the Guards to Finchley" is a performance of a different character; it is steeped in humour and strewn over with delightful absurdities. The approach

[1] This incident of the little devil sawing the leg of the Apostle's stool while the clumsy angel who upholds it has fallen asleep, was only added in the second state of this curious plate, which was probably intended by Hogarth as a burlesque upon Rembrandt, many of the types, the effect of light, and indeed the whole composition resembling somewhat the great Dutch master. Allan Cunningham does not mention that Hogarth likewise painted this subject in 1750 for Lincoln's Inn. Baron Wyndham having left £200 for the purpose of adorning the hall with a painting, Hogarth, at Lord Mansfield's suggestion, was commissioned to execute it. The painting differs totally from the humorous print, being conceived in the dignified Italian style with figures slightly reminiscent of Raphael in the Cartoons. The classic figure of Tertullus in particular contrasts forcibly with the cunning bewigged Jew who occupies the same position in the burlesque print.—Ed.

of Prince Charles, in the fatal Forty-five, is supposed by Hogarth to summon the heroes of London to the field; and the very nature of the important contest is expressed in the central group of the composition, where a grenadier stands, a ludicrous picture of indecision, between his Catholic and Protestant doxies. The scene is laid in Tottenham Court Road. In the distance, the more orderly and obedient portion of the soldiery are seen marching northward; but, if discipline conducts the front, confusion brings up the rear. A baggage waggon moves lumbering along in the middle of the way, with its burden of women, babies, knapsacks, and camp-kettles—and around it is poured a reeling and disorderly torrent of soldiers, inflamed or stupefied with liquor, and stunned and distracted by the clamour of wives, children, and concubines. There is such staggering and swaggering—such carousing and caressing—such neglect of all discipline—and obedience to nothing save the caprice of the moment—as probably never was witnessed; and yet all is natural, consistent, characteristic.

It was inscribed before publication to George the Second, and a print was sent to the palace for royal examination and approval. The king, himself a keen soldier, had naturally expected to see a more serious and orderly work—one more in honour of those favourite Guards who had marched so readily against the rebels. "The first question," says Ireland, "was to a nobleman in waiting—'Pray, who is this Hogarth?' 'A painter, my liege.' 'Painter—I hate painting, and poetry too! neither the one nor the other ever did any good. Does the fellow mean to laugh at my Guards?' 'The picture, an please your majesty, must undoubtedly be considered as a burlesque.' 'What, a painter burlesque a soldier!—he deserves to be picketed for his insolence. Take his trumpery out of my sight.'" Such is the story: it is easier to transcribe than to believe it literally. The painter, however, by all accounts, was mortified by the reception which his work received from his majesty. He certainly dedicated it in a pet to the King of Prussia, as an encourager of art, and received a handsome acknowledgment from Frederick.

Hogarth meant no more by this work than a piece of humorous and good-natured satire. The freedom which an Englishman enjoys allows him to laugh at the failings and the follies of high and low; the ministers of the crown, the ministers of the church, judges, courtiers, sailors, and soldiers, all are alike liable to be satirized and lampooned. No one can walk along our streets without observing, in almost every printseller's window, the most audacious caricatures and representations of the highest as well as the humblest of the land; the toleration of such works is only a proof of the liberty of the people, and the good sense and good nature of their rulers.

When, however, Wilkes quarrelled with Hogarth, he discovered on a sudden the malice of the "March of the Guards to Finchley," and rated the artist roundly. These are the words of honest, conscientious John:—"In the year 1746, when the Guards were ordered to march to Finchley, on the most important service they could be employed in—the extinguishing a Scottish rebellion, which threatened the entire ruin of the illustrious family on the throne, and, in consequence, of our liberties—Mr. Hogarth came out with a print to make them ridiculous to their countrymen and to all Europe; or perhaps it was rather to tell the Scots, in his way, how little the Guards were to be feared, and that they might safely advance. That the ridicule might not stop here, and that it might be as offensive as possible to his own sovereign, he dedicated the print to the King of Prussia, as an encourager of the arts. Is this patriotism? In old Rome, or in any of the Grecian states, he would have been punished as a profligate citizen, totally devoid of all principle. In England he is rewarded, and made serjeant-painter to that very king's grandson."

How little all this bitterness of Wilkes was called for or deserved, a few dates will show. The battle of Culloden, which extinguished the rebellion and the hopes of the House of Stuart for ever, was fought and won in 1746—and the print of which Wilkes complains was published in 1750. What a hardened hater of his country Hogarth must have been—and what indomitable rebels those Scotch-

men, who, after rotting four years on the moor of Drummossie, were ready to profit by the information of the painter, that the Guards were not to be feared, and that they had nothing to do but to advance boldly on London! There is nothing so blind as anger. The very heads of their chiefs were blackening in the sun and wind on Temple Bar three years before this horrid print made its appearance; and Mr. Wilkes had published many numbers of his "North Briton," and eaten many a good dinner in company with Mr. Hogarth, before he discovered that treason had been committed in the "March to Finchley."

The original painting was, on the publication of the print, disposed of by a kind of lottery, established on a surer principle of remuneration than that adopted in the case of "Marriage-à-la-Mode." Seven shillings and sixpence was fixed as the price of a print; and every purchaser of a print was entitled to a chance in the lottery for the picture. Eighteen hundred and forty-three chances were subscribed for; a hundred and sixty-seven tickets, which remained, were presented to the Foundling Hospital. One of the Hospital's tickets drew the desired prize; and on the same night Hogarth delivered the painting to the governors, not a little pleased that it was to adorn a public place. The artist gained £300 by this speculation. "A lottery," he observed, "is the only way a living painter has of being paid for his time." The late Duke of Ancaster offered the Hospital £300 for the painting; it could not, of course, be accepted.

His next pictures were those of "Beer Street" and "Gin Lane"—two very clever works, which have been well described by Ireland. "In the first, we see healthy and happy beings inhaling copious draughts of a liquor which seems perfectly congenial to their mental and corporeal powers: in the second, a group of emaciated wretches, who, by swallowing liquid fire, have consumed both." Beer the artist considers as nutritive and strengthening—gin as poisonous and pernicious. Those who adhere to the former look fresh and hale, perform all the duties of manhood, and the functions of their stations, and die respected and regretted; while those who tipple the latter, pollute the

brain, sap the strength, and become a burden to themselves, and a disgrace to human nature. Hogarth's beer-bibbers are very joyous, pleasant personages—the lovers of gin are squalid and hideous; in the neighbourhood of the first, honest occupations abound and prosper—in the region of the others, the only person who looks happy and thriving is a sordid pawnbroker, at whose house the wretches dispose of their rags, scarcely leaving themselves enough to conceal their shame.

The two pictures called "France" and "England," which followed these, are inspired by the same sort of feeling as the "Roast Beef," and may rank in the same class. They are intensely national, and severely ludicrous. In the former, the French are represented in active preparation for the invasion of England, and heroic fire never animated such a mob of odd mortals to keep time to fife and drum. A priest tries the edge of an axe, which, with chains and instruments of torture, accompanies the invaders; whilst a soldier spits with his sword five frogs, and roasts them over the fire of a bivouac—the sight and smell cheer his passing countrymen. A vessel lies close to the shore, planks are laid between the land and the deck, and the meagre and reluctant heroes of the Grand Monarque proceed on board. The other picture is better. The artist has assembled under the sign of the "Jolly Old Duke of Cumberland" a recruiting party, with such other liegemen of the King of England as love of merriment and love of drink might draw fortuitously together. Beef, bread, and beer have formed the ample regale; and the threatened invasion by France is now the topic of conversation. The ardour of the moment has induced a young rustic to volunteer into the line; the artful or anxious recruit augments his height by standing slily on tiptoe, and the prudent sergeant slopes his measuring rod to enable him to pass muster in inches. A facetious grenadier has drawn a large caricature of the King of France, who brandishes a long sword with one hand, and a gibbet with an empty noose in the other, and exclaims in a label, "You take a my fine ships; you be de pirate, you be de teef; me send my grand armies and hang you all" The

national contempt of danger is well expressed by this group of military worthies; and, had the artist lived in later times, he would have seen the same feeling enthusiastically manifested by the whole island, when the danger was every way more imminent, and the talent of the invader warranted the severest apprehension. The engravings from these pictures were published in 1756, and accompanied with verses by David Garrick, more illustrative of the good-will of the great actor, than of his poetical genius.

Hogarth was peculiarly the painter for the people; he loved to contemplate their scenes of fun and festivity, and expose their follies. "It is worth your while to come to England," thus Sherlock wrote to a Frenchman at Paris, "were it only to see an election and a cock-match. There is a celestial spirit of anarchy and confusion in these two scenes that words cannot paint, and of which no countryman of yours can form even an idea." Hogarth performed what words could not accomplish, and, in a series of prints on these popular subjects, exhibited the anarchy of an English election and the confusion of a cockpit.

Of the Cockpit I shall speak first, for the subject is more contracted in its nature, and less generally interesting than the other. On a platform two cocks, trimmed and armed with steel spurs, are pitted against each other, and a crowd of eager and motley sportsmen press around. No one can look on this scene of barbarity and swindling without feeling conscious that the artist took from living reality the iniquity which he drew. "The scene," says Ireland, "is probably laid at Newmarket; and in this motley group of peers, pickpockets, butchers, rat-catchers, gentlemen, and gamblers, Lord Albemarle Bertie, being the principal figure, is entitled to precedence. What rendered his lordship's passion for amusements of this description very singular, was his being totally blind. In this place he is beset by seven steady friends, five of whom offer to bet with him at the same instant on the event of the battle. One of them, a lineal descendant of Filch, taking advantage of his blindness and negligence, endeavours to convey away a bank-note, deposited in our digni-

fied gambler's hat, to his own pocket; of this attempt his lordship is apprised by a ragged potboy and an honest butcher; but he is so much engaged in the pronunciation of these important words, 'Done! done! done!' that he cannot attend to their hints, and it seems more than probable that the stock will be transferred, and the note negociable in a few seconds." A French marquis looks contemptuously upon the scene, and mutters, "Sauvages! sauvages!" I know not what influence the satire of the painter had on this horrid pastime—it could not be much: those who delight in such scenes are case-hardened beyond the reach of satire.

An election of a member of parliament opens a wide field; and it cannot but be acknowledged that the painter handles his subject with all that is requisite both of knowledge and of feeling. The subject is divided into four scenes—the "Entertainment," the "Canvassing for Votes," the "Polling," and the "Chairing." The first was finished in 1755, and the last appeared in 1758. The whole were received with very general approbation. Of those varied scenes of feasting and bribery, canvassing and corruption, sober villainy and tipsy drollery, eating and drinking, fighting and fooling, it would require a volume to give a full account. In allusion to those periodical contests Voltaire remarked that the English went mad once every seven years, and these four pictures sustain to a great extent the accuracy of the sarcasm. In other works which the artist executed he gave us but a portion of society, a glimpse of public or of domestic life, a satiric exposition of some particular vice or darling folly; but in these he has shown us the majesty of the people, broad and unfettered, in the full and free exercise of constitutional functions, and the enjoyment of more than royal powers.

The first scene is laid at an inn, where the table is spread and the cellar-doors thrown open for the friends of the court candidate. This seeker of a seat in St. Stephen's was one Mr. Thomas Potter, a gentleman with an easy unembarrassed air, and a look of courteous assurance; he is at the head of the table, and seems to have finished his dinner. A tipsy beldam is whispering in his ear; and a

voter, with all the easy familiarity which the times warrant, knocks their heads together, and shakes the ashes of his pipe among the candidate's powdered curls. At the other end of the table sits a corpulent dignitary of the borough corporation, with a forty-horse power of swallow. He has, however, gulped oysters till his breath is stopped, and a friendly barber-surgeon restores him by opening a vein. All around the table streams a full and flowing tide of electors—barbers, cobblers, and counsellors—the briber and the bribed, the rustic wit, the village politician, and the parson, with

"A voice like the sea, and a drouth like a whale,"

are mingled in wild and ludicrous disorder. Showers of stones, from the partisans of the patriotic and popular candidate, make their way through the windows; and the fierce uproar without contrasts with the drunken festivity within. The portrait of Sir John Parnell was introduced into this scene at his own request: "My face," he said, "is well known in Ireland, and will help the sale of the engraving."

The second scene, the "Canvass," is laid in the street of the borough. Bribery and corruption are busy. A freeholder is represented, standing independent and erect, between two bustling agents of the contending factions, both of whom are putting gold into his not unwilling hands. He stands, the accurate personification of that adage roughened into rhyme by the wit of the poet,

"—— The value of a thing
Is just the price that it will bring."

His wishes are with the heaviest purse and the most liberal hand: and while interest advises him to take all that both will give, conscience counsels him to vote for the best paymaster. He stands, like the balance of justice, with gold in either scale; and one sees the mercury of sordid satisfaction ascending within him as guinea drops after guinea into his avaricious hands. The British Lion —a fragment of the prow of a ship—sits swallowing the Lily of France; beside it, the buxom landlady of one of the candidate's inns is counting the gains she has made by her interest in the borough, while an able-bodied grenadier

looks on, conscious that ere all be over he is like to have a share in the spoil. A crowd in the distance, inflamed by drink, inspired by the freedom of these festive times, and touched a little by personal interest, are engaged in a fierce attack on the "Crown" public-house. A rustic, whose natural stupidity seems increased by drink, is employed in sawing away the projecting beam from the wall which supports the sign, wholly unconscious that when the Crown falls he will fall also. Both candidates are busied in bribing and conciliating the male and female proprietors of the borough; and a very ancient and meritorious son of freedom, Punch, has declared himself a candidate upon the united interest of fun and frolic.

The third is the "Polling." The lame, the blind, the deaf, the maimed, the dying, and even the dead, are moving or carried onward to the hustings. The first man who tenders his vote is an old soldier, who has lost a leg and his right hand; he is opposed by a quibbling attorney, on the ground that the law requires the voter to lay his *right* hand on the sacred book and swear. The second voter is deaf, and not a little insane; but he is prompted by Dr. Shebbeare, who is roaring into his ear the name of the candidate to whom he promised his vote. This worthy person was pilloried by Mansfield for a libel on the king, and pensioned into silence by Bute. The third voter is a sick man, borne along in a blanket, with his doctor by his side. This is a satire on Dr. Barrowby, who persuaded a dying patient to accompany him in his chariot to vote for Sir George Vandeput; the man went, voted, and expired. The rear of the electors is brought up by a blind man and a cripple. The carriage of Britannia is overturning, while her coachman and footman are cheating at cards on the box. A woman admonishes them in vain, by holding up for sale a last dying speech, inscribed with a ready gibbet and an empty noose.

The fourth and concluding scene is the "Chairing of the Member," and it is one of the busiest and best of the series. This fortunate person—who was thought to look very like Bubb Doddington, afterwards Lord Melcombe—is seated on a chair, raised on the shoulders of four

brawny constituents, and borne in triumph through the free and loyal borough of Guzzledown. Foes, however, mingle with friends, and it cannot be supposed that his triumph will be endured without opposition and strife. The fray which is to trouble him in the midst of his success is begun. A thrasher, with his flail, prostrates by a blow, meant for another, one of the living props of the chair; the member's wig rises from his head with fear; a lady swoons at the sight; a sow, with a litter of pigs, goes grunting in desperation through the thickest of the mob; while a scared goose flies over the borough, to carry to St. Stephen's an account of the insult offered to the pure and honourable House in this attack on the independent representative of Guzzledown. David Garrick gave the painter some two hundred pounds for those truly national productions.

Of the likenesses of living persons introduced into these designs, it is scarcely necessary to speak. There are merits which are temporary and fleeting; faces are forgotten as generations pass away; and of all the millions who lived and breathed in 1756, a few names only remain on the sunny side of oblivion. All who smarted from the artist's satire are as cold and silent as himself; and by inserting in my narrative the names of Thomas Potter, Dr. Shebbeare, the Rev. Dr. Cosserat, and Sir John Parnell—nay, even of Lord Melcombe and the Duke of Newcastle—I add but little to the interest of these four pictures. The merits of original fancy, natural action, ceaseless humour, and amusing and instructive incident, are matters of another kind; and these keep, and will keep, the works of Hogarth as fresh and interesting as they ever were. All who are acquainted with the business of the English hustings will perceive and feel the accuracy of these designs. There is always some noisy patriot of the hour to mislead and inflame the people; there is always some shrewd and crafty courtier to soothe and bribe his way; and shall we ever want a swarm of sordid electors to sell their votes to the most opulent?

I have remarked elsewhere that when Hogarth painted his own portrait he etched upon the palette a winding

line, with this motto, "Line of Beauty and Grace." The mystery of the winding line and these words remained unexplained till 1753, when he published the "Analysis of Beauty," a work very clearly and cleverly written, containing many original and natural notions concerning art, and composed on purpose to establish the principle, that the winding or serpentine line is the foundation of all that is fair and beautiful in the works of art, as well as the productions of nature. The examples which he cites, and the arguments which he uses, are ingenious, if not convincing. In nature the leaves which clothe the trees, and the flowers which cover the ground, with all that buds and blooms, and yields fragrance or fruit, are formed of winding lines. The line of grace is found in the varied beauty of the hills, in the grandeur of the mountains, in things the most minute or magnificent. The beasts, the birds, the insects, and the fishes, support or illustrate the maxim of the artist; and in the shells which cover our shores, the most beautiful undulating lines are united with the most exquisite colours. Of woman's beauty and of man's gracefulness we may say the same. The heavens above, the earth beneath, and the waters under the earth, are all supporters of the universal principle—of which Hogarth claims the merit of being the discoverer.

Of the great artists of Greece and the eminent artists of Italy, he observes that they wrought in the express spirit of the great principle of nature—from the glorious instinct of genius more probably than from knowledge. Their works contain the line of beauty in its most natural and elegant forms, and he nowhere observed stiff and rigid lines in any of the highest productions. This was accomplished, he supposes, by imitating with great exactness the beauties of nature. Michael Angelo, he imagines, had some notion of the existence of this principle, when he advised his scholar, Marcus de Siena, to make "a figure pyramidical, serpent-like, and multiplied by one, two, and three; in which precept the whole mystery of the art consisteth; for the greatest grace and life which a picture can have is, that it expresses motion, which painters call the spirit of a picture."

A book of so much pretension coming from a self-educated man, accompanied with numerous etchings illustrating the author's principles of excellence in art, and containing, moreover, some little satire upon portrait painters and copiers of pictures, was not likely to go unchallenged. He expected to be laughed at by some, and ridiculed by others: in a little epigram he whimsically enough describes his own feelings:—

> "What! a book, and by Hogarth! then, twenty to ten,
> All he's gain'd by the pencil he'll lose by the pen."
> "Perhaps it may be so—howe'er, miss or hit,
> He will publish—here goes—it is double or quit."

Those who were hurt worst spoke first. It was not indeed likely that a man who openly scorned the mere mechanical productions of the easel, who thought and said that academies which instructed students in making new pictures from old ones were injurious to art, and that portrait painting was unworthy of genius, would be allowed to publish such a bold lesson without opposition or remark. A storm of verse and prose assailed his heresy, and spared neither his works, his person, nor his fireside.

The truth of the principle of beauty was sharply questioned and severely ridiculed; and the authorship of the volume itself was ascribed to some literary friends. Hogarth modestly says, that he persuaded a friend to correct his language, and prepare his work for the press. It was urged that a man gross in conversation, unacquainted with literary composition, and of very humble scholarship, was unlikely to be the author of a work which, to sustain their own theory, the critics acknowledged to be clever. It was remarked too, with some show of triumph, that he could not spell his native language, and specimens of careless or intentional misspelling were quoted from his prints. Even John Wilkes, long after the controversy had subsided, strove to renew the clamour by a fierce invective, in which he calls him "the humorous W. Hogarth, the supposed author of the 'Analysis of Beauty.' He never caught," says the veracious patriot, "a single idea of beauty, grace, or elegance; but, on the other hand, he never missed the

least flaw in almost any production of nature or of art. This arose in some measure from his head, but much more from his heart. After 'Marriage-à-la-Mode,' the public wished for a series of prints of a 'Happy Marriage.' Hogarth made the attempt, but the rancour and malevolence of his mind made him very soon turn away with envy and disgust from objects of so pleasing contemplation, to dwell and feast a bad heart on others of a hateful cast, which he pursued, for he found them congenial, with the most unabating zeal and the most unrelenting gall."

All such remarks might have been spared. Hogarth had natural genius enough to conceive, and knowledge sufficient to enable him to mature, the new discovered principle of beauty, and render it worthy of publication. That the skill and kindness of his friends suggested emendations there can be no doubt, since he says so himself; but no one can dispute the title to the work with him, and no critic of comprehension or candour will cast suspicion upon his claim of authorship, because he made blunders in syntax and mistakes in spelling. Men of great literary eminence might be named who made slips in both; nor have there been wanting men who denied to poets the merit of their own productions. Garth was accused of not writing his "Dispensary," and from Allan Ramsay some have tried to take away the honours of the "Gentle Shepherd." Time has disposed of all these objections, and allowed, in spite of the malice of Wilkes, that the "Analysis of Beauty" is the work of Hogarth: but the truth of the principle which the work was composed to establish, has not yet received universal sanction.

Of those who affected to laugh at the Analysis, the bitterest was Wilkes, but the most eminent was Walpole. "The book," he says, "is the failing of a visionary, whose eyes were so little open to his own deficiencies, that he believed he had discovered the principle of grace, and with the enthusiasm of a discoverer cried out, Eureka! This was his famous 'Line of Beauty,' the ground-work of his Analysis, a book which has many sensible hints and observations, but that did not carry the conviction nor meet the general acquiescence he expected. As he treated his contempora-

ries with scorn, they triumphed over him in turn, and imitated him to expose him. Many wretched burlesque prints came out to ridicule his system. There was a better answer to it in one of the two prints that he gave to illustrate his hypothesis. In the ball, had he confined himself to such outlines as compose awkwardness and deformity, he would have proved half his assertion; but he has added two samples of grace, in a young lord and lady, that are strikingly stiff and affected: they are a Bath beau and a country beauty." So writes Walpole: the principle of beauty, however, was not necessarily unfounded because the painter failed in creating two figures excelling in beauty and grace, any more than his heart was corrupt and envious because he did not choose to paint a "Happy Marriage."

Of what Hogarth himself thought of the excellence of his new discovery, and the acrimony of his enemies, there is an ample account by his own hand. I select some characteristic passages. "No Egyptian hieroglyphic ever amused more than my 'Line of Beauty' did for a time. Painters and sculptors came to me to know the meaning of it, being as much puzzled with it as other people, till I explained it by publishing my Analysis. Then, indeed, and not till then, some found it out to be an old acquaintance of theirs, though the account they could give of its properties was very near as satisfactory as that which a day-labourer who constantly uses the lever could give of that machine as a mechanical power." This is the language of a man at peace with himself, and satisfied with his success; the following is dictated by a heart much less at ease:—

"My preface and introduction to the Analysis contain a general explanation of the circumstances which led me to commence author; but this has not deterred my opponents from loading me with much gross, and I think unmerited obloquy. Among other crimes of which I am accused, it is asserted that I have abused the 'Great Masters;' this is far from being just. So far from attempting to lower the ancients, I have always thought, and it is universally admitted, that they knew some fundamental principles in nature which enabled them to produce works that have been the admiration of succeeding ages; but I have not allowed

this merit to those *leaden headed* imitators, who, having no consciousness of either symmetry or propriety, have attempted to *mend nature*, and, in their truly *ideal figures*, gave similar proportions to a Mercury and a Hercules."

Another and a better spirit influenced him in the following passage—he is proposing to seek the principles of beauty in nature, instead of looking for them in mere learning. His words are plain, direct, and convincing. "Nature is simple, plain, and true in all her works, and those who strictly adhere to her laws, and closely attend to her appearances in their infinite varieties, are guarded against any prejudicial bias from truth; while those who have seen many things that they cannot well understand, and read many books which they do not fully comprehend, notwithstanding all their parade of knowledge, are apt to wander about it and about it; perplexing themselves and their readers with the various opinions of other men. As to those painters who have written treatises on painting, they were in general too much taken up with giving rules for the operative part of the art, to enter into physical disquisitions on the nature of the objects. With respect to myself, I thought I was sufficiently grounded in the principles of my profession to throw some new lights on the subject; and, though the pen was to me a new instrument, yet, as the mechanic at his loom may possibly give as satisfactory an account of the materials and composition of the rich brocade he weaves as the smooth-tongued mercer, surrounded with all his parade and showy silks, I trusted that I might make myself tolerably understood by those who would take the trouble of examining my book and prints together—for, as one makes use of signs to convey his meaning in a language of which he has little knowledge, I have occasionally had recourse to my pencil."

But to fix the fluctuating principles of taste—the object of the "Analysis of Beauty"—was a flight beyond the powers of Hogarth. Every master spirit that appears on the earth goes to work in his own peculiar way; and though the structures which he raises are founded in nature, yet they differ in the exterior effect and internal arrangement from what has preceded them, as the Gothic architecture

differs from the Grecian. The rules which one man lays down for composition are overthrown by another, who forms his own laws—and these again are swept away by the next succeeding spirit, as readily as a wave of the sea obliterates words written on its sands. But if any man ever discovered the universal principle on which all works of lasting glory in art are constructed, it seems to have been Hogarth. The great law which he promulgates belongs to universal nature —it was in nature that he found it, and by nature he has explained it. The bird flies, the stream flows, the flower springs, the sun runs his course, and the ocean rolls his waves, all in accordance and conformity with his undulating line of beauty and grace. Men, whose feelings were imbued with nature, wrought by a kind of instinctive inspiration in the right way, when they executed those statues and paintings which continue to astonish the earth. Walpole was amazed to find that an old ballad-maker had obeyed, in Gill Morrice, all the precepts of Horace—without having heard of the poet. In truth, nature dictates what is right to those whose minds are lofty, and who passionately feel the subject of their meditation.

If Hogarth felt annoyed by the petulance of painters and critics, who sought to destroy his reputation, overturn his system, and wound the peace of his family, he must have been very sensibly gratified by the praise which poured in upon him from foreign parts, and from Englishmen of talent and intelligence. Amongst the latter, Warburton added his testimony to the merits of Hogarth, in the following intrepid words:—"I was pleased," says the Bishop, in a letter to the artist, "that you have determined to give us your original and masterly thoughts on the great principles of your profession. You owe this to your country, for you are both an honour to your profession, and a shame to that worthless crew professing vertù and connoisseurship; to whom all that grovel in the splendid poverty of wealth and taste are the miserable bubbles." It would appear from this that Warburton had seen the Analysis before publication. After this it would be unfair to withhold the praise of Benjamin West—a painter prudent in speech and frugal in commendation. "I re-

member, when I was a lad," says Smith, in his account of Nollekens, "asking the late venerable President West, what he thought of Hogarth's 'Analysis of Beauty,' and his answer was—'It is a work of the highest value to every one studying the art. Hogarth was a strutting, consequential little man, and made himself many enemies by that book; but now that most of them are dead, it is examined by disinterested readers, unbiassed by personal animosities, and will be more and more read, studied, and understood.'"

The collection of pictures belonging to Sir Luke Schaub was dispersed in 1758, by public auction, when Sir Thomas Seabright became the proprietor of a "Sigismunda," imputed to Correggio, for the sum of £400. The effect which this circumstance had upon the mind of Hogarth is described by Walpole, in words which I dare not soften and cannot commend:—"From a contempt of the ignorant vertuosi of the age, and from indignation at the impudent tricks of picture-dealers, whom he saw continually recommending and vending vile copies to bubble-collectors, and from having never studied—indeed, having seen few good pictures of—the great Italian masters, he persuaded himself that the praises bestowed on those glorious works were nothing but the effects of ignorance. He talked this language till he believed it; and having heard it often asserted, as is true, that time gives a mellowness to colours and improves them, he not only denied the proposition, but maintained that pictures only grew black and worse by age. He went farther—he determined to rival the ancients, and unfortunately chose one of the finest pictures in England as the subject of his competition. This was the celebrated 'Sigismunda' of Sir Luke Schaub, said to be painted by Correggio—probably by Furino—but no matter by whom. It is impossible to see the picture or read Dryden's inimitable tale, and not feel that the same soul animated both. After many essays, Hogarth produced his 'Sigismunda,' but no more like Sigismunda than I to Hercules. Not to mention the wretchedness of the colouring, it was the representation of a maudlin strumpet just turned out of keeping; and, with eyes red with rage and

usquebaugh, tearing off the ornaments her keeper had given her. To add to the disgust raised by such vulgar expression, her fingers were bloodied by her lover's heart, that lay before her like that of a sheep for her dinner."

This is severe, pointed, and untrue. The Sigismunda of Hogarth is not tearing off her ornaments, nor are her fingers bloodied by her lover's heart. It is said that the picture resembled Mrs. Hogarth, who was a very handsome woman; and to this circumstance Wilkes maliciously alludes in his unprincipled attack on her husband. "If the 'Sigismunda,'" says this polite patriot, "had a resemblance of anything ever seen on earth, or had the least pretence to either meaning or expression, it was what he had seen, or perhaps made—in real life—his own wife in an agony of passion; but of what passion no connoisseur could guess." That Mrs. Hogarth sat for the picture of "Sigismunda" seems to have been known to conscientious John, and this is supported by that lady's conduct to Walpole. The noble biographer sent her a copy of his "Anecdotes," accompanied by a courtly and soothing note; but she was so much offended by his description of the "Sigismunda," that she took no notice of his present. The widow of the artist was poor—and an opinion so ill-natured—so depreciating—and so untrue, injured the property which she wished to sell: she loved too the memory of her husband, and resented in the dignity of silence the malicious and injurious attack. She considered the present as an insult offered when she had no one to protect her. I love her pride and reverence her affection.

Sir Richard Grosvenor, for whom the "Sigismunda" was painted, thought as unfavourably of it as Walpole himself. In Hogarth's memorandum-book the following account of the matter is written by his own hand—it seems fair and candid, and has not been contradicted:—"This transaction having given rise to many ridiculous falsehoods, the following unvarnished tale will set all in its true light. The picture of 'Sigismunda' was painted at the earnest request of Sir Richard Grosvenor, now Lord Grosvenor, in the year 1759, at a time when Mr. Hogarth had fully determined to leave off painting, partly on

account of ease and retirement, but more particularly because he had found by thirty years' experience that his pictures, except in an instance or two, had not produced him one quarter of the profit which arose from his engravings. However, the flattering compliments, as well as generous offers made him by the above gentleman, who was immensely rich, prevailed upon the unwary artist to undertake this difficult subject, which (being seen and fully approved of by his lordship whilst in hand) was, after much time and the utmost efforts, finished—but how, the painter's death can only positively determine. The price required for it was therefore not on account of its value as a picture, but proportioned to the value of the time it took in painting."

The statement is further confirmed by the following letter, which the artist addressed to Sir Richard Grosvenor:—"I have done all I can to the picture of 'Sigismunda;' you may remember you was pleased to say you would give me what price I should think fit to set upon whatever I would paint for you; and, at the same time that you made this generous offer, I, in return, made it my request that you would use no ceremony in refusing the picture when done, if you should not be thoroughly satisfied with it. This you promised should be as I pleased, which I now entreat you would comply with, without the least hesitation, if you think four hundred pounds too much money for it. One more favour I have to beg, which is, that you will determine on this matter as soon as you can conveniently, that I may resolve whether I shall go on with another picture for Mr. Hoare the banker on the same terms, or stop here."

The answer of Sir Richard Grosvenor was short—and could not fail to wound deeply the feelings of Hogarth:—"I should sooner have answered yours of the 13th instant," says this patron of native genius, "but have been mostly out of town. I understand by it that you have a commission from Mr. Hoare for a picture. If he should have taken a fancy to the 'Sigismunda,' I have no sort of objection to your letting him have it; for I really think the performance so striking and inimitable, that the constantly

having it before one's eyes would be too often occasioning melancholy ideas to arise in one's mind, which a curtain's being drawn before it would not diminish the least." This is sufficiently lordly and insulting. That Hogarth endured it without retort may be imputed either to pride or to the love of repose—for age and its infirmities were now coming upon him. It made, however, a deep impression upon his mind, which even the controversy, into which he was soon afterwards precipitated, with Churchill and Wilkes, could not efface. Like his uncle, the artist was something of a poet, and the following lines, upon the conduct of his patron, are not without cleverness—they possess a rarer merit—good nature. He alludes to the "Sigismunda."

"Nay, 'tis so moving, that the knight
Can't even bear it in his sight;
Then who would tears so dearly buy,
As give four hundred pounds to cry?
I own he chose the prudent part,
Rather to break his word than heart,
And yet, methinks, 'tis ticklish dealing
With one so delicate in feeling."

"Sigismunda," thus refused by the person for whom it was painted, and traduced and ridiculed by the artists of the day, remained on Hogarth's hands. Of its excellence he certainly had some doubts; yet his pride forbade him to allow this—he desired his widow not to dispose of it for less than five hundred pounds. But a picture, like a play, once condemned—seldom rises into popularity. His injunctions were obeyed, nor was the "Sigismunda" sold till the death of Mrs. Hogarth, when it was bought by Boydell.

I have now to give some account of Hogarth's quarrel with Churchill and Wilkes—a quarrel which embittered the few remaining days of the great artist, and brought no increase of reputation to his adversaries. The pencil and pen of the painter, and the pens of the politician and the poet, were eagerly dipped in the gall of this bitter dispute:—Let us attend to Hogarth's words first—he speaks coolly and reasonably. He alludes first to the abuse which he says the expounders of the mysteries of old pictures had heaped on his "Sigismunda," and the influence it had on

his health:—"However mean the vender of poisons may be, the mineral is destructive—to me its operation was troublesome enough. Ill-nature spread so fast, that now was the time for every little dog in the profession to bark and revive the old spleen which appeared at the time of the 'Analysis.' The anxiety that attends endeavouring to recollect ideas long dormant, and the misfortunes which clung to this transaction coming on at a time when nature demands quiet, and something besides, exercise to cheer it, added to my long sedentary life, brought on an illness which continued twelve months. But when I got well enough to ride on horseback, I soon recovered. This being at a period when war abroad and contention at home engrossed every one's mind, prints were thrown into the background, and the stagnation rendered it necessary that I should do some *timed thing*, to recover my lost time and stop a gap in my income. This drew forth my print of 'The Times,' a subject which tended to the restoration of peace and unanimity, and put the opposers of those humane objects in a light which gave great offence to those who were trying to ferment destruction in the minds of the populace."

The account rendered by Wilkes himself corresponds pretty nearly with that of Hogarth:—"Wilkes (says the Patriot himself) was waging open war with the Scottish minister, Lord Bute, when Hogarth sacrificed private friendship at the altar of party madness, and lent his aid to the government. A friend informed him that the painter was about to publish a print, satirizing Pitt, Temple, Churchill, and himself. He remonstrated, and remarked, that the subjects suitable for his pencil were those of an universal or moral nature. The answer was, that neither Wilkes nor Churchill were included in the satire, though Pitt and Temple were. On this Wilkes informed Hogarth, that he should never resent reflections on himself, but if his friends were attacked, he should then deem himself wounded in the most sensible part, and avenge their cause as well as he was able. 'The Times' appeared, and was instantly followed by an attack in the 'North Briton' on 'The King's Sergeant-Painter, William Hogarth.'"

The attack was sharp and malicious—and Hogarth was not a person to be bearded with impunity. It would seem, however, that he had not anticipated any resentment on the part of Wilkes and Churchill, whose persons his satire had spared, and with whom he lived in a sort of friendly intercourse, resembling an armed neutrality. Wilkes, with unconscious naïveté, when he heard of the contemplated assault upon him and his friends, requested Hogarth to meddle with *moral* subjects—and as the same request suited Churchill, it was made in both their names. Precious advice to Hogarth! He had poured out his strength, from youth to age, on profligacy, male and female;—he had rebuked the folly of popular projectors;—read a lesson, and a terrible one, to the heartless alliances which rank forms with riches;—attacked the House of Commons in the corrupt elections of members of parliament—and, at the hazard of his sovereign's displeasure, satirized the royal guards. Hogarth now held the situation of sergeant-painter to the king, and might think himself justified, if not called upon, in defending the government. "The Times" at any rate presented a fit subject for humorous satire, and he was not sparing. And for Wilkes—whose whole life was one systematic and continual act of aggression against others, who had devoted himself to the service of a faction, and spared neither wit nor falsehood in furthering of his cause—for him to order Hogarth to relinquish his own constant satiric employment, and leave to him a monopoly of party bitterness, seems a strange and romantic demand.

When the venomous article in the "North Briton" appeared, Hogarth, who had not then attacked Wilkes, felt deeply the insinuations which it contained, both in a domestic and a loyal sense, and sought immediate revenge. What the pen was to the politician, the pencil was to the artist, and he accordingly produced that celebrated piece, which can scarcely be called a caricature, since it represents strongly, but truly, the bodily and mental image of John Wilkes. The artist has placed in the civic chair this patron saint of purity and liberty—a mark for perpetual laughter and loathing. For what he thought of his work

we have his own words:—"My friends advised me," says Hogarth, "to laugh at the nonsense of party writing—who would mind it? But I could not rest; for

> "'He that filches from me my good name,
> Robs me of that which not enriches him,
> And makes me poor indeed.'

Such being my feelings, I wished to return the compliment, and turn it to some advantage. This renowned patriot's portrait, drawn as like as I could as to features, and marked with some indications of his mind, answered my purpose. The ridiculous was apparent to every eye. A Brutus—a saviour of his country—with such an aspect—was so arrant a farce, that, though it gave rise to much laughter in the lookers-on, it galled both him and his adherents. This was proved by the papers being crammed every day with invectives against the artist, till the town grew sick of thus seeing me always at full length. Churchill, Wilkes's toadeater, put the 'North Briton' into verse in an 'Epistle to Hogarth;' but as the abuse was precisely the same, except a little poetical heightening, it made no impression, but perhaps effaced or weakened the black strokes of the 'North Briton.' However, having an old plate by me, with some parts ready sunk as a background and a dog, I began to consider how I could turn so much work laid aside to some account—and so patched up a print of Master Churchill, in the character of a bear. The pleasure and pecuniary advantage derived from these two engravings, together with occasionally riding on horseback, restored me to as much health as can be expected at my time of life."

Of the attack by Churchill, Hogarth speaks lightly—and with reason. The poet's character entitled him to take no such liberty with a man of genius, whose name was spotless; he had first disgraced the clerical character by his libertinism, and afterwards flung it aside in scorn and contempt of all decorum: he then commenced satirist by profession, with great success, and during a short and loose life published various poems, of very unequal merits, though all vehement, bitter, and distinguished by a vigorous swing

of versification, recalling a shadow at least of the charm of Dryden. Licentious manners, with wit at will, made Churchill welcome to Wilkes, a man as gay, as witty, and as loose as himself. The abuse of such a personage ought not to have been very formidable, but his popularity made it so; and with the buyers and quoters of his libels be the blame:—"Hogarth," he thus writes to Wilkes, "has broke into my pale of private life, and set that example of illiberality which I wanted. I intend an elegy on him, supposing him dead; but ——— (naming a courtesan) tells me, with a kiss, that he will be really dead before it comes out, for that I have already killed him. How sweet is flattery from the woman we love!"

The consistency of Churchill no one can praise; the malevolence of his nature all must condemn. Of Hogarth he had already written very sharp and venomous things, and had pulled him down, as he boasted and imagined, to the brink of the grave, before the artist moved his pencil against him. In his celebrated epistle he had accused the great painter of being envious, jealous, and vain; of liking his own works, and disliking those of the ancients; and, finally, of being weak, helpless, and grey-headed; and yet, when Hogarth retaliates in a feeble performance, the poet cries out in an ecstasy—"He has broken into my pale of private life, has set the example of illiberality which I wanted, and, as he is dying from the effects of my former chastisement, I shall hasten his decease by writing his elegy." An attack such as this came ungracefully from a man so impure as Churchill. He writes the atrocious letter which I have quoted, with his concubine at his side, to reward his satire with her purchased caresses. Wilkes says truly, in allusion to his own portrait, that he did not make himself, and cared little about the beauty of the case that contained his soul; neither did Hogarth make himself old —yet Churchill exults in the declining health and old age of Hogarth, and rejoices that his enemy is nigh the grave. The green ear is spared sometimes no more than the ripe —the youthful poet was near his own. Milton was not unwilling to claim the merit of having shortened the life of Salmasius, and Churchill had such faith in the terrors

of his own verse, that his vanity was pleased when the death of Hogarth was imputed to his satire. On the whole —this quarrel showed more venom than wit:—"Never," says Walpole, "did two angry men of their abilities throw mud with less dexterity."

The print of "The Times," which occasioned these invectives, verses, and caricatures, is a performance exclusively political—and therefore of local and temporary interest. We must view it through the vista of the year 1764, and not with the hope that general knowledge of nature will supply us with skill to feel and comprehend it. To those unacquainted with the bickerings, and heartburnings, and political manœuvrings of those shifting and slippery times, the print will appear as a ridiculous mystery, or an unintelligible riddle. It was intended as a satire upon Mr. Pitt, afterwards Earl of Chatham—a man of commanding eloquence and astonishing energy of mind; but who was accused of being more charmed with the applause of the mob, than became one aspiring to the rule of a mighty nation.

The last work of Hogarth was worthy of his genius, and is known to the world by the title of "Credulity, Superstition, and Fanaticism." It was the intention of the artist to give a literal representation of the strange effects resulting from literal and low conceptions of sacred things; as also of the idolatrous tendency of pictures in churches, and prints in religious books. To exemplify this he had not far to travel; the more grovelling of the sectaries—they whose enthusiastic delusions Bishop Lavington terms "religion run mad"—supplied the first;—the Church of Rome —the old queen and mother of hypocrisy and corruption—furnished the rest.

He has pictured forth a fierce preacher and a startled congregation. Over the heads of his audience the divine shakes a god with his right hand, holding a devil as a reserve in his left, to intimate that should the former fail to draw them to godliness, with the latter will be their portion. He thinks, with Burns, that,

> "The fear of hell's a hangman's whip,
> To hold the wretch in order."

His looks speak plainly—and never did fanatic preside over a congregation more devoutly delirious. One hearer has sprung to his feet in a kind of agony of rapture; the hair of a second has risen fairly on end, and seems resolved to stand; a third has fallen into a swoon; a fourth hugs an image with peculiar ecstasy; a fifth—a female devotee—faints, and falls back in a very ecstatic manner; while the sixth, one of the soft sex, whose celestial visions, like those of Saint Theresa, suffer discredit by the loose company she keeps, has got a male devotee at her left hand, whose touches have shaken her sanctity so much, that she is dropping the image of her patron saint from her bosom. A Turk looks in at the window, smoking his cigar, and seemingly highly pleased at the sight of superstition which surpasses his own.—The burlesque of Hogarth, after all, goes no farther than the seriousness of others. "Over a Popish altar at Worms," says Burnet, "there is a picture, one would think invented to ridicule transubstantiation. There is a windmill, and the Virgin Mary throws Christ into the hopper, and he comes out at the eye of the mill all in wafers, which a priest takes up to give to the people."

But the time was now approaching when superstition, and folly, and vice were to be relieved from the satiric pencil which had awed them so long—the health of Hogarth began to decline. He was aware of this, and purchased a small house at Chiswick, to which he retired during the summer, amusing himself with making slight sketches and retouching his plates. This house stood till lately on a very pretty spot; but the demon of building came into the neighbourhood, choked up the garden, and destroyed the secluded beauty of Hogarth's cottage. The garden, well stored with walnut, mulberry, and apple trees, contained a small study, with a headstone placed over a favourite bullfinch, on which the artist had etched the bird's head and written an epitaph. The cottage contained many snug rooms, and was but yesterday the residence of a man of learning and genius—Mr. Cary, the translator of Dante. The change of scene, the free fresh air, and exercise on horseback, had for a while a favourable influence on Hogarth's

health; but he complained that he was no longer able to think with the readiness, and work with the elasticity of spirit, of his earlier years. The friends of the artist observed, and lamented, this falling away; his enemies hastened to congratulate Churchill and Wilkes on the success of their malevolence; and these men were capable of rejoicing in the belief that the work of nature was their own.

Though the health of Hogarth was declining, his spirits and powers of humour did not forsake him. In one of his memorandum books he remarks—"I can safely assert that I have invariably endeavoured to make those about me tolerably happy; and my greatest enemy cannot say I ever did an intentional injury; though, without ostentation, I could produce many instances of men that have been essentially benefited by me. What may follow, God knows." This was written nigh the close of his life, and seems entitled to the respect of a rigid self-examination; a confession which has a sacred air deserves confidence. To Wilkes—on the whole—rather than to Churchill, I must impute the vexation which aggravated his illness. Whatever merit there may be in disturbing the latter days of a man of genius, and in pouring additional bitterness into the parting cup, must be conceded to the former:—"One, till now," thus Hogarth writes, "rather my friend and flatterer, attacked me in so infamous and malign a style, that he himself, when pushed even by his best friends, was driven to so poor an excuse as to say he was drunk when he wrote it. Being at that time very weak, and in a kind of slow fever, it could not but seize on a feeling mind." It would, however, be unjust to deny that Churchill did all he could to depreciate the genius, and infest the dying bed of Hogarth. In his poem of "Independence," published in the last week of September, 1764, he contemptuously considers him as already in the grave: these are his words—

> "Hogarth would draw him, envy must allow,
> E'en to the life, were Hogarth living now."

It is painful enough to contemplate a sharp and malicious spirit anticipating the grave, and exulting over a

dying man;—but it is still more sorrowful to think that the profligate Churchill has been commended for the cowardly rancour with which he thus insulted one so far superior to himself in worth as well as in genius.

Hogarth left Chiswick on the 25th of October, 1764, and returned to his residence in Leicester Square. He was very weak, yet exceedingly cheerful; for as the decline of his health was slow, he experienced no violent attacks—nature was silently giving way; his understanding continued clear, he had full possession of his mental faculties, but wanted the vigour to exert them. With the nature of his disorder no physician seems to have made himself acquainted; nor is there any account of who attended him; yet we must not suppose that he was without the benefit of medical advice, or that he had no faith in physic. Next day, having received an agreeable letter from Dr. Franklin, he rough-wrote an answer, and finding himself exhausted, retired to bed. He had lain but a short while when he was seized with a vomiting, and, starting up, rung the bell with such violence that he broke it in pieces. Mary Lewis, a worthy and affectionate relative, came and supported him in her arms till, after two hours' suffering, he expired, from a suffusion of blood among the arteries of the heart.

Hogarth was buried without any ostentation in the churchyard of Chiswick; where a monument, with the family arms, was erected to his memory, and inscribed with the following words:—"Here lieth the body of William Hogarth, Esq., who died October the 26th 1764, aged sixty-seven years." A mask, a laurel wreath, a palette, pencils and book, inscribed Analysis of Beauty, are carved on one side of the monument, accompanied by the following verses by Garrick:—

"Farewell, great painter of mankind!
Who reach'd the noblest point of art,
Whose pictured morals charm the mind,
And through the eye correct the heart.
If Genius fire thee, reader, stay,
If nature touch thee, drop a tear,
If neither move thee—turn away—
For Hogarth's honour'd dust lies here."

Another and a higher hand, that of Dr. Johnson, supplied an epitaph more to the purpose, but still unworthy:—

> "The hand of him here torpid lies
> That drew the essential forms of grace:
> Here closed in death the attentive eyes
> That saw the manners in the face."

His sister Ann followed him to the grave in 1771, and his wife, who loved him living, and honoured him dead, was laid beside him, in November, 1789, in the eightieth year of her age—and there was an end of the House of Hogarth.

William Hogarth was rather below the middle size; his eye was peculiarly bright and piercing; his look shrewd, sarcastic, and intelligent; the forehead high and round.[1] An accident in his youth had left a scar on his brow, and he liked to wear his hat raised so as to display it. He was active in person, bustling in manner, and fond of affecting a little state and importance. He was of a temper cheerful, joyous, and companionable; fond of mirth and good-fellowship,[2] desirous of saying strong and pointed things;—

[1] His own admirably-painted portrait in the National Gallery gives us a faithful idea of his shrewd, honest face. He has represented himself leaning on piled volumes of Shakespeare, Milton, and Swift, as if these were his favourite authors. His little dog Trump, with a physiognomy something like his master's, is also there, ready to snarl at "old masters" on occasion, while his palette, with his cherished "line of beauty and grace" marked upon it, fills the left-hand corner. This portrait, which is dated 1745, was engraved by Hogarth himself in 1749. It is affirmed by several of his biographers that he used this plate for his satirical print of Churchill as a Russian bear, but it does not seem certain from his own account that this was so, in spite of the strong similarity of arrangement. He himself merely says, "Having an old plate by me with some part ready sunk as a background and a dog, I began to consider how I could turn so much work to account, and so patched up a print of Master Churchill in the character of a bear." Surely if it had been the finished plate of his own portrait he thus "patched up," he would have mentioned it.—Ed.

[2] Hogarth's joviality and good-fellowship are abundantly manifest in the amusing record he has left us of his rollicking tour in Kent, made with four chosen companions in 1732. The original sketch-book, containing an account of the doings of this eccentric and lively party, is now in the British Museum, having been purchased, in 1847, for about £100. On the title-page of this merry volume is written—"An account of what

ardent in friendship—and in resentment. His lively conversation—his knowledge of character—his readiness of speech—and quickness of retort, made many covet his

seem'd most remarkable in the Five Days' peregrination of the Five Following persons, viz., Messieurs Tothall, Scott, Hogarth, Thornhill, and Forrest. Begun on Saturday, May the 27th, 1732, and Finished on the 31st of the same month. '*Abi tu et fac similiter.*' Inscription of Dulwich Colledge." Hogarth, and Scott a landscapist of some note in his day, though now chiefly known to us in connection with this tour, were the artists of the party: Thornhill made the map; Tothall was treasurer; while Forrest wrote an account of the proceedings, which was afterwards turned into humorous Hudibrastic verse by their friend the Rev. W. Gostling. He relates how the party started at first of morn from Covent Garden "to see the world by land and water;" how they took a tilt-boat down the river, and, borne along by a mackerel gale, and refreshing themselves from time to time with biscuit, beef, and gin, arrived at Gravesend about six, where they went to a certain Mrs. Bramble's and got breakfast and a barber for their wigs; how they then set out to walk to Rochester, drinking three pots of ale on the way, which enabled them

"By ten
At Rochester to drink again;"

How they saw the Castle, Cathedral, and Watt's Hospital, and took up their quarters at the "Crown," where the fare, consisting

"Of soles, flounders, with crab sauce,
A stuffed and roast calf's heart beside,
With purt'nance minced and liver fryed;"

and the liquor, "fresh beer and sound port," were so much to their taste that they decided not to rise from table till three o'clock; how after this heavy dinner, Scott and Hogarth were still able to play Scotch-hop in the Town-hall; how they then went on to Chatham, where they treated themselves to shrimps, and then, after more drink, went to bed. Their adventures on the next day, Sunday, are of a similar kind, perhaps even more "frolicksome and gay," for they play all sorts of tricks with one another, just like schoolboys, and pelt each other with stones and other weapons, and commit no end of merry foolery. At night they have all to sleep in one room, which again arouses their combative propensities, and the next day they travel on to Queenborough, where Hogarth makes a clever sketch of its

"One short street,
Broad and well pav'd and very neat."

After some experience of sea-sickness off Sheerness, and various other adventures, they get back on Wednesday to Gravesend, and from thence to London, where they arrive, it is to be feared, neither sadder nor wiser men.—Ed.

company, who were sometimes the objects of his satire; but he employed his wit on those who were present, and spared or defended the absent. His personal spirit was equal to his satiric talents; he provoked, with his pencil, the temper of those whom it was not prudent to offend; with him no vice nor folly found shelter behind wealth, or rank, or power. As to the licence of his tongue, he himself often said that he never uttered that sentence about a living man which he would not repeat gladly to his face: as to his works, he always felt conscious of their merit, and predicted with equal openness that his name would descend with no decrease of honour to posterity. He loved state in his dress, good order in his household, and the success of his works enabled him to indulge in the luxuries of a good table and pleasant guests.

No one, save Wilkes, ever questioned his domestic serenity; and his insinuation, which I shall not repeat, appears to have been made without the slightest cause, and for the sake of saying something sharp and annoying. He was a good husband, and Jane Thornhill was an indulgent wife. He felt the injurious insinuations of Wilkes, chiefly on his wife's account; and his widow resented the discourteous language of Walpole, and the coarse invectives of Steevens, with a temper and a calmness which command all respect.

"In his relations of husband, brother, friend, and master," says Ireland, "he was kind, generous, sincere, and indulgent; in diet abstemious, but in his hospitalities, though devoid of ostentation, liberal and free-hearted: not parsimonious, yet frugal;—but so comparatively small were the rewards then paid to artists, that after the labour of a long life he left a very inconsiderable sum to his widow, with whom he must have received a large portion." To this Steevens reluctantly adds, that Hogarth was a punctual paymaster—was uniformly kind to his sisters and to his cousin Mary Lewis;—and—what I hold, though last, not least—that his domestics had remained many years in his service, and that he painted all their portraits and hung them up in his house.

By her husband's will Mrs. Hogarth received the sole property of his numerous plates, and the copyright was

secured to her for twenty years by act of parliament. There were seventy-two plates—from which such a number of impressions were regularly sold as produced a very respectable annual income. But she outlived the period of her right; and indeed, even before this was the case, through the fluctuation of public taste, the sale of the prints had so much diminished as to reduce Mrs. Hogarth to the border of want. The interposition of the king with the Royal Academy at length obtained for her an annuity of £40, which she lived but two years to enjoy.

Steevens, a person who misconceived Hogarth's genius, since he said it was exclusively comic, and who was therefore likely to misunderstand his character, has described him as a man whose whole powers of pleasing were confined to his pencil—whose manners were gross and uncultivated—whose social ambition aspired no higher than to shine in a club of mechanics, and who was rarely admitted into polite circles. Much of this cannot be true. The society into which his profession threw him was often of a high order; he had painted portraits and family conversation-pieces for many years; he had corresponded with and kept the company of men eminent for rank and talent, and his letters to Lord Charlemont and Richard Lord Grosvenor, are distinguished for their courtesy and forbearance. He had sat too with Gray the poet at the table of Walpole; and Walpole himself, the biographer of the artist, and one unlikely to forget a breach of decorum or signal grossness in conversation, since it would have embellished the portraiture he was soon to draw, has been silent. The account which West gave of his being a little bustling and important man—his love of dress and good order—the state which he affected—for he kept his carriage—and his very love of speaking of early hardships in contrast to his present condition, all these circumstances seem to contradict the testimony of Steevens.

Nor is the opinion of this person entitled to much more consideration—when, upon the subject of the *indelicacy* of the works of Hogarth, he opposes the decision of Walpole. "When the Flemish painters attempt humour," says the latter, "it is by making a drunkard vomit; they take

evacuations for jokes; and when they make us sick, they think they make us laugh. A boor hugging a frightful frow is a frequent incident even in the works of Teniers. The views of Hogarth were more generous and extensive—mirth coloured his pictures, but benevolence designed them—he smiled like Socrates, that men might not be offended at his lectures, and might learn to laugh at their own follies." This sensible and accurate estimate displeased Steevens, who proceeded to examine into the grossnesses and indelicacies, real and imaginary, of a man whom he sought to dissect rather than criticize; and in this impure pursuit he is gratified with the detection of open—even of dawning delinquencies. The account of his discoveries may be very briefly dismissed; they are few and inconsiderable in regard to so voluminous an artist, and they are such as naturally presented themselves in works which had a higher aim, as a picture of vice mingles with the sermon which brands and crushes it. Indeed it is wonderful that these blemishes are so few and so trivial. In grappling with folly, and in combating with crimes, he was compelled to reveal the nature of that which he proposed to satirize; he was obliged to set up sin in its high place, before he could crown it with infamy. He shows depravity for the sake of amending it—the Flemings exhibited indecency for our amusement—and it was Mr. Steevens's own fault that he could not see the distinction.

Of Hogarth many anecdotes are related—some are trivial and unimportant, others refer to his character and habits and modes of study; I shall select a few of the latter, as the reader may be desirous to see the first eminent artist whom our country produced, as others saw him, and to know how he looked among his brethren of the pencil and the graver.

Hogarth treated those who sat for their portraits with a courtesy which is not always practised now. "When I sat to Hogarth," said Mr. Cole, "the custom of giving vails to servants was not discontinued. On taking leave of the painter at the door, I offered his servant a small gratuity, but the man very politely refused it, telling me it would be as much as the loss of his place if his master knew it.

This was so uncommon and so liberal in a man of Hogarth's profession at that time of day, that it much struck me, as nothing of the kind had happened to me before." Nor is it likely that such a thing would happen again—Sir Joshua Reynolds gave his servant £6 annually of wages, and offered him £100 a-year for the *door!*

It was Hogarth's custom to sketch out on the spot any remarkable face which struck him, and of which he wished to preserve an accurate remembrance. He was once observed in the Bedford coffee-house drawing something with a pencil on the nail of his left thumb—he held it up to a friend who accompanied him—it was the face, and a very singular one, of a person in the same room—the likeness was excellent.[1] He had dined with some friends at a tavern and as he threw his cloak about him to be gone, he observed his friend Ben Read sound asleep, and presenting a most ridiculous physiognomy: Hogarth eyed him for a moment, and saying softly, "Heavens, what a character!" called for pen and ink, and drew his portrait without sitting down:—a curious and clever likeness, and still existing.

It was in a temporary summer residence at Isleworth that he painted the "Rake's Progress." The crowd of visitors to his study was immense. He often asked them if they knew for whom one or another figure in the picture was designed, and when they guessed wrong he set them right. It was generally believed that the heads were chiefly portraits of low characters well known in town. In the

[1] Four clever drawings, representing characters who frequented "Button's," are now in the British Museum. They are drawn in strong outline and washed with Indian ink or bistre, as was the custom with Hogarth, which gives a very decided character to the faces. The writer possesses a characteristic drawing of the same kind, in which a company of two gentlemen and a lady are represented seated at a table playing cards. A black servant hands tea, and a child plays with a little dog. The outlines in this drawing are very black and firm, and the whole is drawn in a most masterly manner. There are also two oil sketches by Hogarth in the British Museum, one of which represents "Orator Henley Christening a Child." One of the most graceful female figures Hogarth has ever drawn occurs in this sketch; the other is merely a sketch of a female head.—Ed.

"Miser's Feast" he introduced Sir Isaac Shard, a person proverbially avaricious; his son, a young man of spirit, heard of this, and calling at the painter's requested to see the picture. The young man asked the servant whether that old figure was intended for any particular person, who answered it was thought to be very like one Sir Isaac Shard, whereupon he drew his sword and slashed the canvas. Hogarth heard the bustle, and was very angry. Young Shard said, "You have taken an unwarrantable licence—I am the injured party's son, and ready to defend my conduct at law." He went away, and was never afterwards molested.

With a dissatisfied sitter the artist was more fortunate. A nobleman of ungainly looks and a little deformed sat for his picture; Hogarth made a faithful likeness according to the receipt of Oliver Cromwell; the peer was offended with this want of courtesy in a man by profession a flatterer, and refused to pay for the picture, or to take it home. Hogarth was nettled, and informed his lordship, that unless he sent for it within three days, he should dispose of it, with the addition of a tail, to Hare the wild-beast man. The picture was instantly paid for, removed, and destroyed. A similar story is related of Sir Peter Lely.

Concerning Hogarth's vanity, Mr. Belchior, a surgeon of some note, told the following story to Nichols, whose ear was a little too open to anything that confirmed Steevens's theory of the artist's ignorance and want of delicacy. "Hogarth, being at dinner with Dr. Cheselden and some other company, was informed that John Freke, surgeon of St. Bartholomew's hospital, had asserted in Dick's coffee-house, that Greene was as eminent in composition as Handel. 'That fellow, Freke,' cried Hogarth, 'is always shooting his bolt absurdly one way or another. Handel is a giant in music, Greene only a light Florimel kind of composer.' 'Ay, but,' said the other, 'Freke declared you were as good a portrait-painter as Vandyke.' 'There he was in the right,' quoth Hogarth; 'and so I am, give me but my time and let me choose my subject.'"

With Dr. Hoadley, who corrected the manuscript of the

"Analysis of Beauty" for the press, Hogarth was on such friendly terms that he was admitted into one of the private theatrical exhibitions which the doctor loved, and was appointed to perform, along with Garrick and his entertainer, a parody on that scene in Julius Cæsar where the ghost appears to Brutus. Hogarth personated the spectre; but so unretentive—(we are told)—was his memory, that though the speech consisted only of two lines he was unable to get them by heart, and his facetious associates wrote them on an illuminated lantern, that he might read them when he came upon the stage. Such is the way in which anecdotes are manufactured, and conclusions of absence or imbecility drawn. The speech of the ghost written on the paper lantern formed part of the humour of the burlesque. Men, dull in comprehending the eccentricities of genius, set down what passes their own understanding to the account of the other's stupidity.

His thoughts were so much employed on scenes which he had just witnessed, or on works which he contemplated, that he sometimes had neither eyes nor ears for anything else; this has subjected him to the charge of utter absence of mind. "At table," says Nichols, "he would sometimes turn his chair round as if he had finished eating, and as suddenly would re-turn it and fall to his meal again." According to this writer—soon after our artist set up his carriage, he went to visit Beckford, who was then Lord Mayor; the day became stormy during the interview; and when Hogarth took his leave, he went out at a wrong door—forgot that he had a carriage—could not find a hackney coach, and came home wet to the skin, to the astonishment of his wife. This is a good story—and it *may* be true. When Fonthill, the residence of Beckford, was burnt, five out of six of the paintings of "The Harlot's Progress" were unfortunately consumed. The whole series of the "Rake's Progress" escaped into the safe keeping of John Soane, the architect, together with "The Four Election Pictures." For the former he gave 570 guineas—for the latter £1,732.

Accompanying the prints of Hogarth's favourite works, appeared explanations in verse, sometimes with the names

of the authors, but oftener without, and all alike distinguished by weakness and want of that graphic accuracy which marked the engravings. London was at that time infested with swarms of wandering verse-makers, who wrote rhymes on occasions of public mourning or private distress, and who supplied printsellers with jingling commendations of the works which they published. They wrote epigrams for half-a-crown each—a fair price for four wretched lines. From such men Hogarth is supposed to have obtained many of the verses which are attached to his prints. But less charitable persons have ascribed them all to himself.

Heidegger, a Swiss, and the Thersites of his day, had a face beyond the reach of caricatura: his portrait by Hogarth is nature without addition or exaggeration, and it appears in all its hideousness—

"Something between a Heidegger and owl"—

in the little humorous print of the "Masquerade." This man obtained the management of the Opera House, was countenanced by the court, and amassed a fortune. Being once asked in company what nation had the greatest ingenuity—"The Swiss!" exclaimed Heidegger. "I came to England without a farthing, where I gain five thousand a year, and spend it: now I defy the cleverest of you all to do the same in Switzerland."

Hogarth was fond of making experiments in his profession. He resolved to finish the engraving of the first print of the "Election," without taking a proof to ascertain the success of his labours. He had nearly spoiled the plate, and was so affected with the misadventure that he exclaimed, "I am ruined." He soon, however, proceeded to repair the damage which his haste or obstinacy had caused, and with such good fortune that the print in question is one of the clearest and cleverest of all his productions.

"When Barry, the painter," says Smith, "was asked if he had ever seen Hogarth, 'Yes—once,' he replied, 'I was walking with Joe Nollekens through Cranbourne Alley, when he exclaimed, 'There! there's Hogarth.' 'What,' said I, 'that little man in a sky-blue coat?' Off I ran, and though I lost sight of him only for a moment or two,

when I turned the corner into Castle Street, he was patting one of two quarrelling boys on the back, and looking steadfastly at the expression in the coward's face, cried, 'Damn him, if I would take it of him—at him again.'" [1]

The character of William Hogarth as a man is to be sought for in his conduct, and in the opinions of his more dispassionate contemporaries; his character as an artist is to be gathered from numerous works, at once original and unrivalled. His fame has flown far and wide; his skill as an engraver spread his reputation as a painter; and all who love the dramatic representation of actual life —all who have hearts to be gladdened by humour—all who are pleased with judicious and well-directed satire—all who are charmed with the ludicrous looks of popular folly —and all who can be moved with the pathos of human suffering—are admirers of Hogarth. That his works are unlike those of other men, is his merit, not his fault. He belonged to no school of art; he was the produce of no academy; no man living or dead had any share in forming his mind, or in rendering his hand skilful. He was the spontaneous offspring of the graphic spirit of his country, as native to the art of England as independence is, and he may be fairly called, in his own walk, the first-born of her spirit.

He painted life as he saw it. He gives no visions of bygone things—no splendid images of ancient manners; he regards neither the historian's page nor the poet's song. He was contented with the occurrences of the passing day—with the folly or the sin of the hour; to the garb and fashion of the moment, however, he adds story and sentiment for all time.

The morality of Hogarth has been questioned; and indeed the like has befallen Crabbe. We may smile as we look at his works, and we may laugh—all this is true:—

[1] It is almost impossible that this story can be true. Barry arrived in London some time in 1764, and Hogarth died in the October of that same year. Moreover, Nollekens went to Italy in 1760, and did not return until 1770, therefore could never have seen Barry on English soil until six years after Hogarth's death. The story is told in Smith's "Nollekens," which we have already seen is an untrustworthy authority.

the victims whom Hogarth conducts pass through many varied scenes of folly, and commit many absurdities; but the spectacle saddens as we move along, and if we commence in mirth, we are overwhelmed with sorrow at last.[1] His object was to insinuate the excellence of virtue by proving the hideousness of vice;—and, if he has failed who has succeeded? As to other charges, preferred by the malice of his contemporaries, time and fame have united in disproving them. He has been accused of want of knowledge in the human form, and of grace and serenity of expression. There is some truth in this perhaps; but the peculiar character of his pictures required mental vigour rather than external beauty, and serene Madonna-like loveliness could not find a place among the follies and frivolities of the passing scene. He saw a way of his own to fame, and followed it; he scorned all imitation, and by words and works recommended nature for an example and a monitress in art.

His grammatical accuracy and skill in spelling have been doubted by men who are seldom satisfied with anything short of perfection; and they have added the accusation, that he was gross and unpolished. Must men of genius be examples of both bodily and mental perfection? Look at the varied works of Hogarth, and say could a man overflowing with such knowledge of men and manners be called illiterate or ignorant? He was of no college—but not therefore unlearned; he was of no academy—yet who will question his excellence in art? He acquired learning by his study of human nature—in his intercourse with the world—in his musings on the changes of seasons—and on the varying looks of the nation and the aspect of the universe. He drank at the great fountain of information, and went by the ancient road; and till it is shown that his works

[1] Charles Lamb in his well known essay "On the Genius and Character of Hogarth," points out the mistake of supposing that Hogarth was "one of those whose chief ambition was to *raise a laugh*." He says of his prints, "A set of severer satires (for they are not so much comedies which they have been likened to, as they are strong and masculine satires) less mingled with anything of mere fun, were never written upon paper or graven upon copper. They resemble Juvenal or the satiric touches in 'Timon of Athens.'"—Ed.

are without knowledge, I shall look on him as a well-informed man.

In his memorandums respecting the establishment of an Academy of Art in England he writes well and wisely. Voltaire asserts that, after the establishment of the French Academy, not one work of genius appeared, for all the painters became mannerists and imitators. Hogarth agrees with the acute Frenchman; he declares that "the institution will serve to raise and pension a few bustling and busy men, whose whole employment will be to tell a few simple students when a leg is too long, or an arm too short. More—(says Hogarth)—will flock to the study of art than what genius sends; the hope of profit, or the thirst of distinction will induce parents to push their offspring into the lecture-room, and many will appear and but few be worthy. The paintings of Italy form a sort of ornamental fringe to their gaudy religion, and Rome is the general store-shop of Europe. The arts owe much to Popery, and Popery owes much of its universality to the arts. The French have attained to a sort of foppish magnificence in art; in Holland selfishness is the ruling passion, and in England vanity is united with selfishness. Portrait-painting, therefore, has succeeded, and ever will succeed better in England than in any other country, and the demand will continue as new faces come into the market. Portrait-painting is one of the ministers of vanity, and vanity is a munificent patroness; historical painting seeks to revive the memory of the dead, and the dead are very indifferent paymasters. Paintings are plentiful enough in England to keep us from the study of nature; but students who confine their studies to the works of the dead, need never hope to live themselves; they will learn little more than the names of the painters: true painting can only be learnt in one school, and that is kept by nature." These are the written words of a man illiterate and gross, who was unacquainted with grammar and could not spell! In this free, clear, and pithy way, Hogarth handled the great question of public instruction in art, and his conduct has been imputed to envy of the growing fame of Sir Joshua Reynolds. If those sarcastic strictures arose from envy—

of which I find no traces—the envy of Hogarth was met by the contempt of Reynolds; for never in all his letters and discourses does Sir Joshua, save once or so, and that with more of censure than of praise, allude even to the existence of his eminent contemporary.[1]

It is seldom that envy urges such sensible reasons for its opposition. Hogarth disliked a formal school, because he was the pupil of nature, and foresaw that students would flock to it from the feeling of trade rather than the impulse of genius, and that it would become a manufactory for conventional forms and hereditary graces. He satirized some of the dark masters, and laughed at—as well he might—their legions of saints and Madonnas. He saw their influence in England, and he lamented it and lampooned them; but he was not, therefore, insensible to the merits of the more eminent masters. Opulent collectors were filling their galleries with the religious paintings of the Romish Church, and vindicating their purchases by representing these works as the only patterns of all that is noble in art and worthy of imitation. Hogarth perceived that all this was not according to the natural spirit of the nation; he well knew that our island had not yet poured out its own original mind in art, as it had done in poetry; and he felt assured that such a time would come, if native genius were not overlaid systematically by mock patrons and false instructors. In this mood he looked coldly—too coldly perhaps—on foreign art; and perhaps too fondly on his own productions. But even there, where vanity soonest misleads the judgment, he thought wisely. He contemplated his own works, not as things excellent in themselves, but as the rudiments of future excellence, and looked forward with the hope that some happier Hogarth would arise, and raise—on the foundation which he had laid—a perfect and lasting superstructure.

"As a *painter*," says Walpole, "Hogarth has slender merit." What is the merit of a painter? If it be to re-

[1] A distinguished member of the Royal Academy remarked publicly on this passage in the first edition—that Sir Joshua might as well be censured for not naming Fielding and Richardson, as Hogarth was *no painter!*

present life—to give us an image of man—to exhibit the workings of his heart—to record the good and evil of his nature—to set in motion before us the very beings with whom earth is peopled—to shake us with mirth—to sadden us with woeful reflection—to please us with natural grouping, vivid action, and vigorous colouring—Hogarth has done all this—and if he that has done so be not a painter, who will show us one? I claim a signification as wide for the word painter as for the word poet. But there seems a disposition to limit the former to those who have been formed under some peculiar course of study—and produced works in the fashion of such and such great masters. This I take to be mere pedantry; and that as well might all men be excluded from the rank of poets, who have not composed epics, dramas, odes, or elegies, according to the rules of the Greeks.

RICHARD WILSON.

OF the life of RICHARD WILSON little more is known than what is related by Wright; whose account, imperfect and unsatisfactory as it is, was sought for by its author in many sources, and procured with difficulty and fatigue. As the remembrance of the artist himself faded on men's memories, the character of his works began to rise in public estimation. Then, and not till then, the lovers of art perceived that the productions of an Englishman, who lived in want and died broken-hearted, equalled, in poetic conception and splendour of colouring, many of the works of those more fortunate painters, who had kings for their protectors, and princes and nobles for their companions.

He was the third son of a clergyman in Montgomeryshire, whose family was of old standing; and his mother was one of the Wynns of Leeswold—a name of great antiquity, and enriched with the blood of the kings of the principality. He was born in the year 1713.[1] His love of art appeared early. How this came upon him, in a place where there were no paintings to awaken his emotions, we are not informed; but a slight cause will arouse a strong natural spirit. He loved, when a child, to trace figures of men and animals, with a burnt stick, upon the walls of the house; and his father seems to have been willing to encourage, rather than repress, this unprofitable propensity. But he must have carried his experiments much farther, and put them into a more alluring shape, before he succeeded in impressing a sense of his talents on his relation, Sir George Wynn, who took him—I know not at what age—to London, and placed him under the care of one Wright, a painter of portraits, too obscure even for the notice of

[1] According to Redgrave he was born on the 1st of August, 1714.—ED.

Walpole. His progress under such a master could be but little; and no better account can be rendered—than that he lived by portraits, and was distinguished among his wretched contemporaries so far as to be employed to paint a picture of the Prince of Wales and the Duke of York, for their tutor, the Bishop of Norwich. This happened in 1748, when Wilson was thirty-five years old.

Wilson's portraits, whether numerous or not, are now forgotten, with the annual thousands which were then, as now, produced to meet the demand of new faces; nor were they marked, according to all but universal opinion, by any of those happy and graceful touches which please us so much in his landscapes. Edwards, indeed, in his "Anecdotes of Painters," asserts that in drawing a head he was not excelled by any of the portrait-painters of his time—that his treatment was bold and masterly, and his colouring in the style of Rembrandt:—but Edwards is alone as to this matter.[1]

A great and salutary change was soon to be wrought in the character of his productions. In his six-and-thirtieth year he was enabled by his own savings and the aid of his friends to go to Italy, where his talents procured him notice, and his company was courted by men of sense and rank. He continued the study and practice of portrait-painting, and, it is said, with fair hopes of success, when an accident opened another avenue to fame, and shut up the way to fortune. Having waited one morning till he grew weary for the coming of Zucarelli, the artist, he painted, to beguile the time, a scene, upon which the window of his friend looked, with so much grace and effect that Zucarelli was astonished, and inquired if he had studied landscape. Wilson replied that he had not. "Then I advise you," (said the other) "to try—for you are sure of great success." The counsel of one friend was confirmed by the opinion of another. This was Vernet, a French painter—a man whose generosity was equal to his reputation, and that was very

[1] A portrait in full length of J. H. Mortimer, by Richard Wilson, was some time ago in the possession of Mr. John Britton, who valued it at 150 guineas, and in 1842 wrote a pamphlet about it and the paintings and merits of Wilson in general.—A. C.

high. One day, while sitting in Wilson's painting-room, he was so struck with the peculiar beauty of a newly-finished landscape that he desired to become its proprietor, and offered in exchange one of his best pictures. This was much to the gratification of the other; the exchange was made, and, with a liberality equally rare and commendable, Vernet placed his friend's picture in his exhibition-room, and when his own productions happened to be praised or purchased by English travellers, the generous Frenchman used to say, "Don't talk of my landscapes alone, when your own countryman, Wilson, paints so beautifully."

These praises, and an internal feeling of the merits of his new performances, induced Wilson to relinquish portrait-painting, and proceed with landscape. He found himself better prepared for this new pursuit than he had imagined; he had been long insensibly storing his mind with the beauties of natural scenery, and the picturesque mountains and glens of his native Wales had been to him an academy when he was unconscious of their influence. He did not proceed upon that plan of study—much recommended, but little practised—of copying the old masters, with the hope of catching a corresponding inspiration; but he studied their works, and mastered their methods of attaining excellence, and compared them carefully with nature. By this means he caught the hue and character of Italian scenery, and steeped his spirit in its splendour. His landscapes are fanned with the pure air, warmed with the glowing suns, filled with the ruined temples, and sparkling with the wooded streams and tranquil lakes of that classic region.[1] His reputation rose so fast that he obtained pupils. Mengs, out of regard for his genius, painted his portrait; and Wilson repaid this flattery with a fine landscape.

After a residence of six years abroad, he returned to England to try his fortune with his own countrymen; and the commencement was promising. On his arrival in London, he took apartments on the north side of Covent

[1] Some of his sketches and studies of this period were published at Oxford in 1811, under the title "Studies and Designs by Richard Wilson, done at Rome in the year 1752."—Ed.

Garden, where Lely, Kneller, and Thornhill had lived and laboured, and associated with all men distinguished for taste and talent. His picture of "Niobe" confirmed, if it did not increase, the reputation which had followed him from Italy, and his view of Rome raised him to a distinction not surely difficult at that time to attain—that of the ablest landscape-painter of his country. The Duke of Cumberland bought the first[1] and the Marquis of Tavistock the second of these pieces: the prices have not been recorded, but they were probably low. He assisted in instituting the Royal Academy; and on the death of Hayman solicited and obtained the situation of librarian—a place of small profit, but not to be despised by one who had to inspire his countrymen with a new taste, before he could expect to have a succession of purchasers.

The love of landscape-painting spread very slowly—so slowly that, after the sale of a few of his works among the more distinguished of the lovers of art, he could not find a market for the fruits of his study—and had the mortification of exhibiting pictures of unrivalled beauty before the eyes of his countrymen in vain. He soon began to feel that in relinquishing portrait-painting he had forsaken the way to wealth and fashionable distinction, and taken the road to certain want and unprofitable fame. The appeal which his original pursuit made to individual vanity was felt, and through it he had acquired a decent livelihood, which his present employment seemed to deny him. To paint the varied aspect of inanimate nature—to clothe the pastoral hills with flocks, to give wild-fowl to the lakes, ringdoves to the woods, blossoms to the boughs, verdure to the earth, and sunshine to the sky, is to paint landscape it is true—but it is to paint it like a district-surveyor, instead of grouping its picturesque beauties, and inspiring them with what the skilful in art call the sentiment of the scene. Wilson had a poet's feel-

[1] Wilson painted two duplicates of this picture, probably one was for the Duke of Cumberland; but the picture now in the National Gallery was painted for Sir George Beaumont, by whom it was presented to the nation in 1826. It is perhaps the best known of all Wilson's works, having been many times engraved.—Ed.

ing and a poet's eye, selected his scenes with judgment, and spread them out in beauty and in all the fresh luxury of nature. He did for landscape what Reynolds did for faces—with equal genius, but far different fortune. A fine scene, rendered still more lovely by the pencil of the artist, did not reward its flatterer with any of its productions either of oil, or corn, or cattle; as Kneller found dead men indifferent paymasters—so inanimate nature proved but a cold patroness to Wilson.

It was the misfortune of Wilson to be unappreciated in his own day; and he had the additional mortification of seeing works wholly unworthy of being ranked with his, admired by the public and purchased at large prices. The demand for the pictures of Barret was so great, that the income of that indifferent dauber rose to two thousand pounds a-year; and the equally weak landscapes of Smith of Chichester were of high value in the market—at the time when the works of Wilson were neglected and disregarded, and the great artist himself was sinking, in the midst of the capital, under obscurity, indigence, and dejection. He was reduced, by this capricious ignorance of the wealthy and the titled, to work for the meanest of mankind. Hogarth, as we have seen, sold some of his plates for half-a-crown a pound weight—and Wilson painted his "Ceyx and Alcyone" for a pot of beer and the remains of a Stilton cheese![1] His chief resource for subsistence was in the sordid liberality of pawnbrokers, to whose hands many of his finest works were consigned wet

[1] From an eminent member of the Royal Academy, I have received the following version of this story—to which I could add three others—I have retained in the text the most popular one.

"In the anecdote of Wilson's painting the 'Ceyx and Alcyone' there is a slight mistake. The Castle and Rock of the picture were painted *from* and not *for* a pot of porter and a Stilton cheese. From what I have repeatedly heard Farington say, it was not so much the low prices which Wilson got for his pictures, as the general want of employment, which he had to complain of. For such pictures as those of his which Farington had, and Constable has, he used to receive from ten to fifteen guineas, which, according to the value of money then, is quite equal to the prices received by almost any of us now. I won't name the exceptions—I can only say that I am not one."

from the easel. One person, who had purchased many pictures from him, when urged by the unhappy artist to buy another, took him into his shop-garret, and, pointing to a pile of landscapes, said, "Why, look ye, Dick, you know I wish to oblige, but see! there are all the pictures I have paid you for these three years." To crown his disappointments—in a contest for fame with Smith of Chichester—the Royal Society decided against Wilson.

To account for the caprice of the public, or even for the imperfect taste of a Royal Society, is less difficult than to find a reason for the feelings of dislike, and even hostility, with which Wilson was regarded by Reynolds. We are told that the eminent landscape-painter, notwithstanding all the refinement and intelligence of his mind, was somewhat coarse and repulsive in his manners. He was indeed a lover of pleasant company, a drinker of ale and porter—one who loved boisterous mirth and rough humour: and such things are not always found in society which calls itself select. But what could the artist do? The man whose patrons are pawnbrokers instead of peers—whose works are paid in porter and cheese—whose pockets contain little copper and no gold—whose dress is coarse and his house ill-replenished—must seek such society as corresponds with his means and condition—he must be content to sit elsewhere than at a rich man's table covered with embossed plate. That the coarseness of his manners and the meanness of his appearance should give offence to the courtly Reynolds, is not to be wondered at—that they were the cause of his hostility I cannot believe, though this has often been asserted. Their dislike was in fact mutual; and I fear it must be imputed to something like jealousy.

In those moments of irritation and animosity, the cold, calm temper of Reynolds gave him a manifest advantage over an opponent irritable by nature, and soured and stung by disappointment and misfortune. The coarse and unskilful vehemence of *poor Richard* was no match for the cautious malignity of the President, who enjoyed the double advantage of lowering his adversary's talents in social conversation, and *ex cathedrâ* in his Discourses. Reynolds

seems to have been a master in that courtly and malevolent art ascribed by Pope to Addison, of teaching others to sneer without sneering himself, and "damning with faint praise." As a specimen, I transcribe the following passage from one of the President's discourses:—

"Our ingenious academician, Wilson, has, I fear, been guilty, like many of his predecessors, of introducing gods and goddesses, ideal beings, into scenes which were by no means prepared to receive such personages. His landscapes were in reality too near common nature to admit supernatural objects. In consequence of this mistake in a very admirable picture of a storm which I have seen of his hand, many figures were introduced in the foreground, some in apparent distress, and some struck dead, as a spectator would naturally suppose, by the lightning, had not the painter injudiciously, as I think, rather chosen that their death should be imputed to a little Apollo who appears in the sky with his bent bow, and that these figures should be considered as the children of Niobe. The first idea that presents itself is that of wonder in seeing a figure in so uncommon a situation as that in which the Apollo is placed, for the clouds on which he kneels have not the appearance of being able to support him."

This criticism was uttered, indeed, when Wilson was in the grave, and when it could not hurt him personally; it nevertheless proves the insinuating nature of the critic's hostility; and that long and rooted dislike had made him shut his eyes on excellences to which he could not otherwise have been insensible. The man whose landscapes obtained him a high name for poetic feeling and elegant nature, was not likely to select a common scene for the tragic representation of the death of Niobe and her children; and, as that mournful story was his subject, it was necessary to people the landscape with the proper historical actors.[1] Niobe and her offspring are on earth—their destroyer is in heaven; and, as the scene is very grand and magnificent, I cannot conceive that anything is out of place

[1] The figures in Wilson's landscapes were not always painted by himself. He sometimes received assistance from Mortimer and Hayman.—Ed.

or out of character. The Apollo is proportioned to the picture, and seems too buoyant and aërial to need even the support of a cloud; neither is he kneeling, but floating majestically away on one of those boding clouds which accompany thunder. While accusing Wilson of introducing gods and goddesses, Sir Joshua forgot that he himself was in the practice of baptizing the living ladies of England after heathen goddesses, and that he was a dealer in the common-place flattery of raising ordinary mortals to divine honours. He was aware, when he wrote his criticism, that Wilson had had a hard contest with fortune for existence, and that he died heart-broken by poverty and disappointment; it was therefore unkind and ungenerous to attempt to interrupt the quiet progress of his works to the fame which he could not but know awaited them.

It is related that, at a meeting of the members of the Academy on a social occasion, Reynolds proposed the health of Gainsborough as *the best landscape-painter;* on which Wilson added aloud, *and the best portrait-painter too.* The President pretended not to have been aware of the presence of Wilson, and made a courtly explanation. Wilson, who received the apology with a kind of dissatisfied growl, was afterwards accused by his companions of wanting a proper spirit of conciliation—by which, said they, he might have profited, for the President could endure to be flattered, and was kind to those who submitted to his ascendancy. Reynolds had never experienced any reverse of fortune—the applause of the world was with him, and much of its money in his pocket; he might therefore have afforded to be indulgent to a man of genius suffering under the want of honour, and even the want of bread.

Nor was the President of the Academy the only person who distressed him with injurious opinions. A certain coterie of men, skilful in the mystery of good painting, came to the conclusion that the works of Wilson were deficient in the gayer graces of style, and sent Penny, an academician, whom Barry worshipped as one of the chief painters on earth, to remonstrate with the artist, and inform him that, if he hoped for fame or their good opinion,

he must imitate the lighter style of Zucarelli. Wilson was busied on one of his works when this courier from the Committee of taste announced himself and delivered his message. He heard him in silence—proceeded with his labours—then stopped suddenly, and poured forth a torrent of contemptuous words—which incensed the whole coterie, and induced them to withdraw any little protection which their opinion had extended over him.

As the fortune of Wilson declined his temper became touched—he grew peevish—and in conversation his language assumed a tone of sharpness and acidity which accorded ill with his warm and benevolent heart. Some men are raised to stations where the meanness of their nature shows but the more deformed and repulsive by the contrast; while others, originally of amiable character, soured by neglect, and stung by undeserved insult, forget by degrees dignity in despair, and allow their minds to become as squalid as their dress.

Wilson had, nevertheless, spirit enough at all times to resent impertinence. When Zoffani, in his satiric picture of the Royal Academy, represented him with a pot of porter at his elbow, he instantly selected, like Johnson on an occasion little dissimilar, a proper stout stick, and vowed he would give the caricaturist a satisfactory thrashing. All who knew Wilson made sure he would keep his word; but Zoffani prudently passed his brush over the offensive part, and so escaped the cudgelling. On one occasion Jones, a favourite pupil, invited him to see a large landscape which he had painted—he looked, and exclaimed, "How, Mr. Jones, what have you been doing? you have stolen my temple!" "Is it too dark, Sir?" said Jones. "Oh, black enough of all conscience!" answered the other, and instantly retired.

He was fond of the company of Sir William Beechey, and at his house he frequently reposed from the cares of the world and the persecution of fortune. He was abstemious at his meals, rarely touching wine or ardent spirits—his favourite beverage was a pot of porter and a toast; and he would accept that when he refused all other things. This was a luxury of which he was determined to

have the full enjoyment—he took a moderate draught—sat silent a little while, then drank again, and all the time eyed the quart vessel with a satisfaction which sparkled in his eyes. The first time that Wilson was invited to dine with Beechey, he replied to the request by saying, "You have daughters, Mr. Beechey, do they draw? All young ladies draw now." "No, Sir," answered his prudent entertainer, "my daughters are musical." He was pleased to hear this, and accepted the invitation. Such was the blunt honesty of his nature, that when drawings were shown him which he disliked, he disdained, or was unable to give a courtly answer, and made many of the students his enemies. Reynolds had the sagacity to escape from such difficulties by looking at the drawings and saying, "Pretty, pretty," which vanity invariably explained into a compliment.

His process of painting was simple; his colours were few, he used but one brush, and worked standing.[1] He prepared his palette, made a few touches, then retired to the window to refresh his eye with natural light, and returned in a few minutes and resumed his labours. Beechey called on him one day, and found him at work; he seized his visitor hastily by the arm, hurried him to the remotest corner of the room, and said, "There, look at my landscape—this is where you should view a painting if you wish to examine it with your eyes, and not with your nose." He was then an old man, his sight was failing, his touch was unsure, and he painted somewhat coarsely, but the effect was wonderful. He too, like Reynolds, had his secrets of colour, and his mystery of the true principles in painting, which he refused to explain, saying, "They are like those of nature, and are to be sought for and found in my performances." Of his own future fame he spoke seldom, for he was a modest man, but, when he did speak

[1] Wright, who had the information from one of Wilson's pupils, states that the colours he used were "white, Naples yellow, vermilion, light brown, and dark ochre, lake, yellow lake, lampblack, Prussian blue, ultramarine,. and burnt sienna." His greens have become wofully darkened by time, and many of his paintings are very much cracked (probably from the too free use of mastic magilph),—so that now it is difficult to appreciate their pristine appearance.—Ed.

of it, he used expressions which the world has since sanctioned. "Beechey," he said, "you will live to see great prices given for my pictures, when those of Barret will not fetch one farthing."

The salary of librarian rescued him from utter starvation; indeed, so few were his wants, so simple his fare, and so moderate his appetite, that he found it, little as it was, nearly enough. He had as he grew old become more neglectful of his person—as fortune forsook him he left a fine house for one inferior;[1] a fashionable street for one cheap and obscure; he made sketches for half-a-crown, and expressed gratitude to Paul Sandby for purchasing a number from him at a small advance of price. His last retreat in this wealthy city was a small room somewhere about Tottenham-Court Road;—an easel and a brush—a chair and a table—a hard bed with few clothes—a scanty meal and the favourite pot of porter—were all that Wilson could call his own. A disgrace to an age which lavished its tens of thousands on mountebanks and projectors—on Italian screamers, and men who made mouths at Shakespeare.

In this wretched retreat he was found out by a lady of rank, who, desirous of obtaining a good landscape, applied to an acquaintance, a student in art, to recommend a first-rate painter. The youth mentioned Wilson, and accompanying the patroness to his apartment, placed some of his best landscapes in proper lights, and with much tact detained the lady at the other end of the room, lest the

[1] For many years during the latter part of his life Wilson lived at No. 36, Charlotte Street, Fitzroy Square. He liked this house and took a lease of it because of the view that it afforded him of the country around Hampstead. "He was accustomed of a fine evening," writes Redgrave, "to throw open his window and invite his friends to enjoy with him the glowing sunset behind the Hampstead and Highgate hills. He and Marlowe the water-colour painter used to sketch the old elms in front of Marylebone Gardens, the Vauxhall of the Northern district, now entirely blotted out and forgotten. Woollet the engraver subsequently lived in the same house; two arched windows, long since bricked up, were the painter's rooms, and out of the upper one we may fancy him with his shaved head and tasseled cap looking from time to time under his shading hand to refresh his eye with light. A practice we are told that he continually followed."—Ed.

rough appearance of their finish should alarm her. She was so much pleased, that she commissioned two pictures, fixed the prices, and drove away. Wilson detained his young friend by the arm, looked feelingly in his face, and said, "Your kindness is all in vain—I am wholly destitute —I cannot even purchase proper canvas and colour for these paintings." The young man gave him twenty pounds —for he was related to rich people—then went home and said to himself, "When Wilson, with all his genius, starves, what will become of me?" He laid palette and pencils aside, pursued his studies at College, and rose high in the Church.

It is reported that Reynolds relaxed his hostility at last—and, becoming generous when it was too late, obtained an order from a nobleman for two landscapes at a proper price. This kindness softened the severity of Wilson's animadversions on the president; but old age with its infirmities was come upon him; his sight was failing, his skill of touch was forsaking him; and his naturally high spirit had begun to yield at last to the repeated injuries of fortune. London was relieved from witnessing the melancholy close of his life. A small estate became his by the death of a brother; and, as if nature had designed to make some amends for the neglect of mankind, a profitable vein of lead was discovered on his ground. When this twofold good fortune befell him, he waited on his steady friend, Sir William Beechey, to ask him if he had any commands for Wales. His spirits were then high, but appeared assumed, for his health was visibly declining, and his faculties were impaired. He put his hands to each side, and pressing them, said, with a sorrowful smile, "Oh! these back settlements of mine!" He took an affecting farewell of Sir William, and set out for his native place, where, far from the bitterness of professional rivalry, and placed above the reach of want, he looked to enjoy a few happy days.

He arrived safely at Colomondie, beside the village of Lanverris, in Denbighshire, and took up his residence with his relation, Mrs. Jones. The house was elegant and commodious, and the situation of that kind which Wilson

loved. It stood among fine green hills, with old romantic woods, picturesque rocks, verdant lawns, deep glens, and the whole was cheered with the sound as well as the sight of running water. He was now in affluence—was loved and respected by all around him—and, what was as much to him, or more, he was become a dweller among scenes such as had haunted his imagination, even when Italy spread her beauty before him. He wrought little and walked much;—the stone on which he loved to sit, the tree under which he shaded himself from the sun, and the stream on the banks of which he commonly walked, are all remembered and pointed out by the peasantry. But he wanted—what wealth could not give—youth and strength to enjoy what he had fallen heir to. His strength failed fast—his walks became shorter and less frequent—and the last scene he visited was where two old picturesque fir-trees stood, which he loved to look at and introduce into his compositions. Walking out one day, accompanied by a favourite dog—whether exhausted by fatigue, or overcome by some sudden pain, Wilson sank down, and found himself unable to rise. The sagacious animal ran home, howled, pulled the servants by their clothes, and at last succeeded in bringing them to the aid of his master. He was carried home, but he never fairly recovered from the shock. He complained of weariness and pain, refused nourishment, and languished and expired in May, 1782, in the sixty-ninth year of his age.

As a landscape-painter the merits of Wilson are great; his conceptions are generally noble, and his execution vigorous and glowing; the dewy freshness, the natural lustre and harmonious arrangement of his scenes, have seldom been exceeded. He rose at once from the tame insipidity of common scenery into natural grandeur and magnificence—his streams seem all abodes for nymphs, his hills are fit haunts for the muses, and his temples worthy of gods. His whole heart was in his art, and he talked and dreamed landscape. He looked on cattle as made only to form groups for his pictures, and on men as they *composed* harmoniously. One day, looking on the fine scene from Richmond Terrace, and wishing to point

out a spot of particular beauty to the friend who accompanied him—"There," said he, holding out his finger, "see, near those houses—there, where the *figures* are." He stood for some time by the waterfall of Terni in speechless admiration, and at length exclaimed, "Well done: water, by God!" In aërial effect he considered himself above any rival. When Wright of Derby offered to exchange works with him, he answered, "With all my heart. I'll give you air, and you will give me fire."

"Wilson," says Fuseli, discoursing on art in 1801, "observed nature in all her appearances, and had a characteristic touch for all her forms. But though, in effects of dewy freshness, and silent evening lights, few have equalled and fewer excelled him, his grandeur is oftener allied to terror, bustle, and convulsion than to calmness and tranquillity. He is now numbered with the classics of the art, though little more than the fifth part of a century has elapsed since death relieved him from the apathy of cognoscenti, the envy of rivals, and the neglect of a tasteless public; for Wilson, whose works will soon command prices as proud as those of Claude, Poussin, or Elzheimer,[1] resembled the last most in his fate, and lived and died nearer to indigence than ease."

Wilson's landscapes are numerous, and are scattered, as they should be, through public galleries and private rooms.[2] They are in general productions of fancy rather than of existing reality—scenes pictured forth by the imagination rather than transcribed from nature; yet there is enough of nature in them to please the commonest clown, and enough of what is poetic to charm the most fastidious fancy. He sometimes indeed painted fac-similes of scenes, but his heart disliked such unpoetic drudgery; for his thoughts were ever dwelling among hills and streams renowned in story and song, and he loved to expatiate on ruined temples and walk over fields where great

[1] This prediction has been fully realized. Several of his pictures have fetched high prices lately. His picture of "Apollo and the Seasons" sold at Rogers's sale for 700 guineas.—Ed.

[2] Many of them have been seen of late years at the Winter Exhibitions at Burlington House.—Ed.

deeds had been achieved, and where gods had appeared among men. He was fortunate in little during his life—his "View from Kew Gardens," though exquisite in colour and in simplicity of arrangement, was returned by the King, for whom it was painted; nor was the poetic loveliness of his compositions felt till such acknowledgment was useless to the artist.

The names of a few of his principal compositions will show the historical and poetical influence under which he wrought:—"The Death of Niobe," "Phaëton," "Morning," "View of Rome," "Villa of Mecænas at Tivoli," "Celadon and Amelia," "View on the River Po," "Apollo and the Seasons," "Meleager and Atalanta," "Cicero at his Villa," "Lake of Narni," "View on the Coast of Baiæ," "The Tiber near Rome," "Temple of Bacchus," "Adrian's Villa," "Bridge of Rimini," "Rosamond's Pond," "Langallon Bridge," "Castle of Dinas Bran," "Temple of Venus at Baiæ," "Tomb of the Horatii and Curatii," "Broken Bridge of Narni," and "Nymphs Bathing." His pencil sometimes forsook subjects of classic or poetic fame, and dwelt on scenes of natural loveliness; some of these are very captivating compositions—there is a light let in upon the hills, and a verdant freshness[1] among the trees, such as few painters have surpassed. He frequently copied his own pictures, as want of bread or the taste of his customers dictated; this, which all others have done with impunity, has been made matter of reproach; there are men who will not be pleased, and some who deserve not to be pleased, and Wilson experienced the enmity of both.

In person he was above the middling size; his frame was robust, and inclining to be corpulent; his head was large, and his face red and blotchy; he wore a wig with the tail plaited into a club, and a three-cocked hat according to the fashion of his time. In his earlier days, when hope was high, he was a lover of gay company and of gay attire; he sometimes attended the Academy in St. Martin's Lane, in a green waistcoat ornamented with gold lace. He loved truth and detested flattery; he could endure a

[1] This "verdant freshness" has greatly faded since Cunningham's time.—Ed.

joke but not contradiction. He was deficient in courtesy of speech—in those candied civilities which go for little with men of sense, but which have their effect among the shallow and the vain. His conversation abounded with information and humour, and his manners, which were at first repulsive, gradually smoothed down as he grew animated. Those who enjoyed the pleasure of his friendship, agree in pronouncing him a man of strong sense, intelligence, and refinement, and every way worthy of those works which preserve the name of Richard Wilson.

SIR JOSHUA REYNOLDS.

JOSHUA, the son of the Reverend Samuel Reynolds and Theophila Potter, his wife, was the tenth of eleven children,[1] five of whom died in infancy. He was born at Plympton, in Devonshire, on Thursday, July 16th, 1723, three months before the death of Sir Godfrey Kneller, "thus perpetuating," say some of his biographers, "the hereditary descent of art." This descent of talent had a better security for continuation than the life of a new-born child. Wilson was ten years old, and Hogarth had already distinguished himself. The admirers and disciples of Sir Joshua imagined that the mantle of art remained suspended in the air from the day of Kneller's ascent, and refrained from descending upon other shoulders till their favourite rose to manhood and eminence. The pride of Reynolds would have resented, in life, this compliment from his friends—he who shared, in imagination, the imperial robe of Michael Angelo, would have scorned the meaner mantle of Godfrey Kneller.

Few men of genius are allowed to be born or baptized in an ordinary way; some commotion in nature must mark the hour of their birth, some strange interposition must determine their name—the like happened to young Reynolds. His father, a clergyman of the established church, gave him the scriptural name of Joshua, in the belief, says Malone, who had the legend from Bishop Percy, of Dromore, that some enthusiast of the same name might be induced to give him a fortune. The family motives, as recorded by Northcote, had more of the shrewdness of calculation in them. An uncle, from whom something might be expected, lived in the neighbourhood, and *he* was a Joshua. Owing to the

[1] According to the dates of the baptism of these children, as registered at Plympton, he was the seventh child.—Ed.

haste or carelessness of the clergyman, the church may claim some share in the marvels which accompanied his birth; he was baptized in one name, and entered in the parish register in another—the Joshua of all the rest of the world is a Joseph at Plympton.

The Reverend Samuel Reynolds, a pious and indolent man, who performed, without reproach, his stated duties in religion, and presided, with the reputation of a scholar, in the public school of Plympton, seems to have neglected, more than such a parent ought, the education of his son.[1] It is true that the boy, inspired (as Johnson intimates in his life of Cowley) with Richardson's "Treatise on Painting," appeared, like Hogarth before him, to be more inclined to make private drawings than public exercises; and it is likewise true that his father rebuked those delinquencies, on one occasion at least, by writing on the back of a prohibited drawing, "Done by Joshua out of pure idleness." But transient rebuke will not cure habitual inattention—the education which we miss in youth we rarely obtain in age, and a good divine and a learned parent could not but know how much learning adorns the highest and brightens the humblest occupation. Northcote, the pupil, and lately the biographer, of Reynolds, reluctantly admits his master's deficiency in classical attainments. But his incessant study of nature, and practice in art, his intercourse with the world at large, and familiarity with men of learning and ability, accomplished in after-life much of what his father had neglected in youth. "The mass of general knowledge by which he was dis-

[1] There does not seem to be any real ground for reproach in this matter. Even as a young man Sir Joshua was not deficient in ordinary education. Of course, like most born artists, he preferred sketching on the back of his exercises to acquiring Latin and Greek; but this surely was not his father's fault. A portrait of the elder Reynolds, painted by his son, is still preserved in the Cottonian Library at Plymouth. It represents a somewhat bald-headed, round-faced man, with a peculiarly mild and placid countenance. His income as Master of the Plympton Grammar School was only £120 a year; but upon this he seems to have brought up his seven children who lived beyond infancy very creditably. Several letters of his are extant, having relation to his son Joshua's settlement in London, which show him to have been by no means a careless father.—ED.

tinguished," says Northcote, "was the result of much studious application in his riper years." "I know no man," observed Johnson to Boswell, "who has passed through life with more observation than Sir Joshua Reynolds."

His father, however, conceived that he had acquired learning sufficient for the practice of physic, for to that profession he was originally destined. He observed to Northcote that if such had been his career in life, he should have felt the same determination to become the most eminent physician, as he then felt to be the first painter of his age and country. He believed, in short, that genius is but another name for extensive capacity, and that incessant and well-directed labour is the inspiration which creates all works of taste and talent.

His inclination to idleness as to reading and industry in drawing, began to appear early. "His first essay," says Malone, who had the information from himself, "was copying some slight drawings made by two of his sisters, who had a turn for art: he afterwards eagerly copied such prints as he met with among his father's books: particularly those which were given in the translation of 'Plutarch's Lives,' published by Dryden. But his principal fund of imitation was Jacob Catt's 'Book of Emblems,' which his great grandmother by the father's side, a Dutchwoman, had brought with her from Holland." The prints in "Plutarch" are rude and uncouth; those in the "Book of Emblems" are more to the purpose, and probably impressed upon him by the comparison, that admiration of foreign art which grew with his growth and strengthened with his strength.

When he was some eight years old, he read "The Jesuit's Perspective" with so much care and profit, that he made a drawing of Plympton school, a plain Gothic building, raised partly on pillars, in which the principles of that art were very tolerably adhered to. His father, a simple man, and easily astonished, exclaimed when he saw this drawing, "This is what the author of the 'Perspective' asserts in his preface, that by observing the rules laid down in this book, a man may do wonders—for this is

wonderful." Had the old man lived to see the great works of his son, in what words would he have expressed his admiration?

The approbation of his father, with his own natural love of art, induced him more and more to devote his time to drawing, and neglect his studies at school. He drew likenesses of his sisters and of various friends of the family; his proficiency increased with practice; and his ardour kept pace with his growing skill. Richardson's treatise on Painting was now put into his hands, "The perusal of which," says Malone, "so delighted and inflamed his mind, that Raphael appeared to him superior to the most illustrious names of ancient or modern times —a notion which he loved to indulge all the rest of his life."

With no other guides but such prints as he could collect, and little support but his own enthusiasm, Reynolds made many drawings and many portraits, in which his friends, who now began to be attracted by his progress, perceived an increasing accuracy of outline, and a growing boldness and freedom. Of those boyish productions no specimen, I believe, is preserved;[1] he himself probably destroyed them, being little pleased with what he had done; but it is inconceivable that a youth like this, who gave so little of his leisure to other knowledge, should have executed nothing worthy of remembrance at the age of nineteen. There is no doubt that, as soon as he had a fair field for the display of his talents, he showed a mind stored with ready images of beauty, and a hand capable of portraying them with truth and effect.

A provincial place, like Plympton, was too contracted for his expanding powers, and a friend and neighbour, of the name of Cranch,[2] advised that Joshua should be sent

[1] A portrait is still preserved at Plymouth of the Rev. Thomas Smart, tutor in the family of the first Lord Edgcumbe, which is said to have been painted by Reynolds when he was not more than twelve years old. It is stated by Mr. Tom Taylor to be "not without character, and of a certain broad cleverness."—Ed.

[2] Or Craunch, a gentleman of independent fortune who lived at Plympton, and who seems to have been the first to perceive the talent of the young Joshua. He advanced money to help in his journey to Italy,

to study and improve himself in London. To London he was accordingly sent, on the 14th of October, 1741, and on the 18th of the same month, the day of Saint Luke, the patron saint of painters, he was placed under the care of Mr. Hudson. Of this propitious circumstance, his biographers take particular notice—it keeps the chain of remarkable circumstances unbroken. This favourite of the fates was born three months before the death of Kneller—was named Joshua in a kind of speculation upon Providence—and commenced his studies in London on the day of Saint Luke. Fortune having done her best, young Reynolds had nothing more to do but stand in the way and be pushed silently on to wealth and reputation.

Hudson, the most distinguished portrait-maker of that time, was nevertheless a man of little skill and less talent; who could paint a head, but without other aid was unable to place it upon the shoulders. He was in truth a mere manufacturer of portraits; and as the taste and practice of Reynolds lay in the same line, there was some propriety in the choice. The timely counsel of his neighbour Cranch would have long afterwards been rewarded with the present of a silver cup—had not an accident interfered. "Death," says Northcote, "prevented this act of gratitude—I have seen the cup at Sir Joshua's table." The painter had the honour of the intention and the use of the cup—a twofold advantage, of which he was not insensible.

At this time Hogarth was in the full enjoyment of his fame. His works were the wonder of every one, and an example to none. His peculiar excellence indeed was of such an order that rivalry there was hopeless; and no artist had the sagacity to see that, by adopting a style more sober and less sarcastic, with a greater infusion of beauty, a name as great or greater than his might have been achieved. Students consumed their time in drawing in-

and always took a lively interest in his career. Joshua himself is reported by his father to have said that "he would rather be an apothecary than an *ordinary* painter; but if he could be bound to an eminent master, he would choose painting." Hudson was then considered all that could be desired in the way of eminence. He received £120 as premium with his distinguished pupil, and Joshua was bound to him for four years, but did not remain quite two.—ED.

cessantly from other men's works, and vainly thought, by gazing constantly on the unattainable excellence of Raphael and Correggio, to catch a portion of their inspiration. When any one departed from such tame and servile rules, he was pronounced a Gothic dreamer, and unworthy of being numbered among those happy persons patronized by Saint Luke. This accounts for the name of Hogarth being rarely or never found in the lectures or letters of the artists of his own time. Men who are regularly trained to the admiration of a certain class of works admit few into the ranks of painting who have not a kind of academic certificate, and lop carefully away all wild or over-flourishing branches from the tree of regular art. Amongst persons of this stamp, to admire Hogarth amounts to treason against the great masters. The painters of those days were worshippers of the "grand style"—a term which would seem to mean something alone and unapproachable, for no man offered to make any approaches to it by works that partook of either dignity or imagination.

Reynolds proceeded with his studies under Hudson; but it seldom happens that a man of no genius and moderate skill can give sound counsel to one who longs for distinction, and has the talent to obtain it. Instead of studying from the best models, he caused his pupils to squander time in making careful copies from the drawings of Guercino. These he executed with so much skill, that it was difficult to distinguish them from the originals; and some of them are, at this present moment, shown in the cabinets of the curious as the masterly drawings of Guercino.

While he remained with Hudson he went to a sale of pictures, and just before the auctioneer commenced he observed a great bustle at the door, and heard "Pope! Pope!" whispered round the room. All drew back to make way for the poet to pass, and those who were near enough held out their hands for him to touch as he went along. Reynolds held out his, and had the honour of a gentle shake, of which he was ever after proud. This was one of the early anecdotes of his life which he loved to relate; it shows the enthusiasm of the young painter, and the popularity of the great poet.

He continued for two years in the employment of Hudson, and acquired with uncommon rapidity such professional knowledge as could then and there be obtained. He painted during that period various portraits, of which he never gave any account, and made many sketches and studies which would require a minute description to be comprehended. It is enough to say, that in general they contained the germ of some of his future graces, and displayed considerable freedom of handling and truth of delineation. Among the productions most worthy of remembrance was the portrait of an elderly servant-woman of Hudson's, in which, says Northcote, he discovered a taste so superior to the painters of the day, that his master, not without displaying a strong feeling of jealousy, foretold his future eminence. It was accidentally exhibited in Hudson's gallery, and obtained general applause. This was more than the old man could endure. Without any warm or angry words, a separation took place, and Reynolds returned into Devonshire.

Had his talents been known, and had his works at that period been publicly exhibited, Reynolds would have remained in London; for patronage is ever ready to encourage skill such as his, exerted in such a department. He returned home, however, in 1743, and passed three years in company, from which, as he informed Malone, little improvement could be got. Of this misemployment of his time he always spoke with concern. He had, however, the good sense to consider his disagreement with Hudson as a blessing; otherwise, he confessed, it might have been very difficult for him to escape from the tameness and insipidity, from the fair tied wigs, blue velvet coats, and white satin waistcoats, which his master bestowed liberally on all customers. Of the use of the three years in question, Reynolds was certainly a competent judge; yet weight must be allowed to the opinion of Northcote, who says, that during this period he produced many portraits, particularly one of a boy reading by a reflected light, which were undoubtedly very fine. And in truth Sir Joshua himself seems to have acknowledged this, when, on seeing some of these pieces at the distance of thirty years,

he lamented that in so great a length of time he had made so little progress in his art.[1]

It was indeed impossible for a mind so active and a hand so ready to continue idle: and there can be no doubt that Reynolds was silently improving himself, even though he was not satisfied with the progress. There were few paintings of excellence indeed near him, but it is not on admirable paintings alone that a painter should look; there was beauty and manliness enough in Devonshire for the purposes of his profession, and when he was weary of that, there were the images which he had stored away in his memory, and which his fancy could recall whenever it was desirable. It is more satisfactory to some of his professional friends to think, that he studied with profit the works of William Gandy of Exeter—a painter, some of whose portraits Reynolds certainly spoke of as equal to those of Rembrandt.[2] One of Gandy's works he particularly admired, the portrait of an Alderman of Exeter, placed in one of the public buildings of that place; and one of his observations he took much pleasure in repeating, namely, that a picture should have a richness in its texture as if the colours had been composed of cream or cheese.

When he was two-and-twenty years old, Reynolds and his two youngest unmarried sisters took a house at the town of Plymouth Dock:[3] here he occupied the first floor, and employed his time in painting portraits. It must be confessed that many of his productions, up to this period, were carelessly drawn—in common attitudes, and undistinguished by those excellences of colouring and power of

[1] His father, in a letter to Mr. Cutliffe, a gentleman who took great interest at this time in the young Joshua, speaks of his having painted twenty portraits, and having ten more bespoke. This was in 1744, and several portraits of Devonshire worthies of this early date are in the possession of Mr. Kendal, of Pelym, M.P. These achievements throw some doubt on the alleged misemployment of his time.—Ed.

[2] This William Gandy was the son of James Gandy, a pupil of Vandyck's, who painted so much in his master's style that some of his pictures have been passed off for Vandyck's. The son seems to have painted in a different style. Tom Taylor speaks of his portraits as being "broadly and forcibly painted."—Ed.

[3] It was probably not until after his father's death, in 1746, when he was twenty-three, that he settled at Plymouth.—Ed.

expression which have made his name famous. His old master, Hudson, was still strong within him. One hand was hid in the unbuttoned waistcoat, the other held the hat; and the face was looking forward with that vacant listlessness which is the mark of a sitter who conceives portrait-painting to resemble shaving, and that the *sine quâ non* is to keep his features stiff and composed. One gentleman desired to be distinguished from others, and was painted with his hat on his head; yet so inveterate had the practice of painting in one position become, that—if there be any truth in a story as yet uncontradicted—when the likeness was sent home, the wife of the patient discovered that her husband had not only one hat on his head, but another under his arm. It is, however, well known that, even when his reputation was high, Reynolds permitted ladies, and gentlemen too, to select for themselves the positions they wished to be painted in; and his Devonshire patrons of this early period might, in all likelihood, consider it as desirable to appear, as much as possible, like their fathers and their friends. When left to the freedom of his own will, some of his attitudes, even in these days, were bold enough. A portrait of himself, which represents him with pencils and palette in his left hand, and shading the light from his eyes with his right, was painted at this time, and is, without doubt, a work of great merit.[1]

Miss Chudleigh, a young lady of rare beauty, afterwards too famous as Duchess of Kingston, happened to be on a visit at Saltram, in the neighbourhood of Plymouth, and sat for her portrait. This seems to have pleased Reynolds less than another sitter, whom he obtained at the same time, for he could not foresee that she would become a duchess. This was the commissioner of Plymouth Dock; he wrote to his father with a joy which he sought not to conceal, that he had painted the likeness of the greatest man in the place. The performance which obtained him

[1] This masterly painting is now in the National Portrait Gallery. It certainly represents him as quite a young man; but it is supposed by some critics to have been executed at a somewhat later period, when his style was more formed.—Ed.

most notice was the portrait of Captain Hamilton, of the noble family of Abercorn. It was painted in 1746.

On Christmas day, in the year 1746, his father died. He was a man of respectable learning, and remarkable for the innocence of his heart and the simplicity of his manners. He was what is called an absent man, and was regarded by his parishioners as a sort of Parson Adams. Of his forgetfulness it is said that, in performing a journey on horseback, one of his boots dropped off by the way, without being missed by the owner; and of his wit—for wit also has been ascribed to him!—it is related that, in allusion to his wife's name, *Theophila*, he made the following rhyming domestic arrangement:

> "When I say The
> Thou must make tea—
> When I say Offey
> Thou must make coffee."

Reynolds was now twenty-three years old, and his name was beginning to be heard beyond the limits of his native county. He had acquired the friendship and patronage of the third Lord Edgcumbe, and of Captain, afterwards Lord Keppel. He had paid a second visit to London, and lived for a time in Saint Martin's Lane, then the favourite residence of artists, and where something which resembled an academy was established. His growing fame and skill acquired and secured friends, and his graceful and unpresuming manners were likely to forward his success; he was polite without meanness, and independent without arrogance.

Rome, which is in reality to painters what Parnassus is in imagination to poets, was frequently present to the fancy of Reynolds: and he longed to see with his own eyes the glories in art, of which he heard so much. In May, 1749, Captain Keppel was appointed Commodore in the Mediterranean station, for the purpose of protecting the British merchants from the insults of the Algerines, and he invited Reynolds to accompany him. The young artist willingly embarked with the full equipment of his profession, and, touching at Lisbon, went ashore and witnessed

several religious processions. He next visited Gibraltar; and on the 20th of July landed at Algiers, where he was introduced to the Dey, who behaved with civility, and dismissed Keppel and his companion with assurances of amity and good-will, which he afterwards seemed disinclined to keep. From Algiers they sailed for Minorca, and landed at Port Mahon on the 23rd of August. The friendship of Keppel, and the kindness of General Blakeney, were here very serviceable; through their influence and his own skill, Reynolds was employed to paint portraits of almost all the officers in the garrison; and, as he lived free of all expense at the governor's table, he improved his fortune at the same time that he exercised his talents.

Reynolds was detained in Minorca longer than he wished. As he was taking an airing on horseback, his horse took fright, and rushed with him down a precipice, by which his face was severely cut, and his lip so much bruised that he was compelled to have some of it cut away. A slight deformity marked his mouth ever after. His deafness was imputed by some to the same misfortune; but that misfortune dated from a dangerous illness in Rome. After a residence of three months, he left Port Mahon, landed at Leghorn, and went directly to Rome.

Of his first sensations in the Metropolis of Art he has left us a minute account. "It has frequently happened, (says he)—as I was informed by the keeper of the Vatican —that many of those whom he had conducted through the various apartments of that edifice, when about to be dismissed, have asked for the works of Raphael, and would not believe that they had already passed through the rooms where they are preserved: so little impression had those performances made on them. One of the first painters in France once told me that this circumstance happened to himself: though he now looks on Raphael with that veneration which he deserves from all painters and lovers of the art. I remember very well my own disappointment when I first visited the Vatican; but on confessing my feelings to a brother student, of whose ingenuousness I had a high opinion, he acknowledged that the works of Raphael had the same effect on him, or rather they did not produce the

effect which he expected. This was a great relief to my mind; and on inquiring further of other students, I found that those persons only who, from natural imbecility, appeared to be incapable of relishing those divine performances, made pretensions to instantaneous raptures on first beholding them. In justice to myself, however, I must add, that though disappointed and mortified at not finding myself enraptured with the works of this great master, I did not for a moment conceive or suppose that the name of Raphael, and those admirable paintings in particular, owed their reputation to the ignorance and prejudice of mankind; on the contrary, my not relishing them, as I was conscious I ought to have done, was one of the most humiliating circumstances that have ever happened to me; I found myself in the midst of works executed upon principles with which I was unacquainted: I felt my ignorance and stood abashed. All the indigested notions of painting which I had brought with me from England, where the art was in the lowest state it had ever been in, (it could not, indeed, be lower,) were to be totally done away and eradicated from my mind. It was necessary, as it is expressed on a very solemn occasion, that I should become *as a little child.* Notwithstanding my disappointment, I proceeded to copy some of those excellent works. I viewed them again and again; I even affected to feel their merit, and admire them more than I really did. In a short time a new taste and a new perception began to dawn upon me, and I was convinced that I had originally formed a false opinion of the perfection of art, and that this great painter was well entitled to the high rank which he holds in the admiration of the world. The truth is, that if these works had really been what I expected, they would have contained beauties superficial and alluring, but by no means such as would have entitled them to the great reputation which they have borne so long, and so justly obtained."

That Reynolds had imagined the Vatican filled with works of another order from what he found there, is only informing us that in his earlier years he thought differently from Raphael. He had been accustomed to admire stiff or extravagant attitudes, and to put faith in works

deficient in the sober dignity and majestic simplicity which distinguished the illustrious Italian. He saw those noble productions; and though at first he could not feel their excellence, he, before he left Rome, became one of their daily worshippers. All this was very natural: but the conclusion which Reynolds draws, viz. that none but an imbecile person can be alive at first sight to the genius of a Raphael, is certainly rash, and, most probably, erroneous.

"Having" (he says) "since that period frequently revolved the subject in my mind, I am now clearly of opinion, that a relish for the higher excellences of art is an acquired taste, which no man ever possessed without long cultivation and great labour and attention. On such occasions as that which I have mentioned, we are often ashamed of our apparent dulness; as if it were to be expected that our minds, like tinder, should catch fire from the divine spark of Raphael's genius. I flatter myself that now it would be so, and that I have a just and lively perception of his great powers; but let it be always remembered, that the excellence of his style is not on the surface, but lies deep; and at the first view is seen but mistily. It is the florid style which strikes at once, and captivates the eye for a time, without ever satisfying the judgment. Nor does painting in this respect differ from other arts. A just poetical taste, and the acquisition of a nice discriminative musical ear are equally the work of time. Even the eye, however perfect in itself, is often unable to distinguish between the brilliancy of two diamonds; though the experienced jeweller will be amazed at its blindness; not considering that there was a time when he himself could not have been able to pronounce which of the two was the more perfect."

I must repeat that I doubt as to all this. True art is nature exalted and refined; but it is nature still. We look on a noble scene—on a high mountain—on a mighty sea—on a troubled sky—or on any of the splendid pictures which the Lord of the Universe spreads before His creatures, and we require no long course of study, no series of academic lectures on light and shade, to enable us to feel their grandeur or their beauty. If the study of many years, and great labour and attention, be absolutely necessary to en-

able men to comprehend and relish the nobler productions of the poet and the painter—then who has not judged by guess and admired by random some of the most glorious works of the human mind? That it cost Reynolds much time and study to understand and admire them is nothing: he had to banish preconceived false notions; to dismiss idolized and merely conventional beauties, and strip himself of laboured absurdities, with which he had been bedecking himself from his infancy. He had to rise out of false art into true nature—and this was not to be done in a day. But is it necessary that all men should start with a false theory? The acquisition of a natural taste in poetry, or a correct musical apprehension, may be the work of time with some, but they are as certainly a kind of inspiration in others. Reynolds himself seems to have thought with more accuracy when he wrote as follows:—

"The man of true genius," (says he) "instead of spending all his hours, as many artists do while they are at Rome, in measuring statues, and copying pictures, soon begins to think for himself, and endeavours to do something like what he sees. I consider general copying a delusive kind of industry; the student satisfies himself with the appearance of doing something; he falls into the dangerous habit of imitating without selecting, and of labouring without any determinate object; as it requires no effort of the mind, he sleeps over his work, and those powers of invention and disposition, which ought particularly to be called out and put in action, lie torpid, and lose their energy for want of exercise. How incapable of producing anything of their own those are who have spent most of their time in making finished copies, is an observation well known to all who are conversant with our art."

To Reynolds's own written account I may add the testimony of a friend, who often conversed with him upon the glories of Rome:—"When arrived in that garden of the world," says Northcote, "that great temple of the arts, his time was diligently and judiciously employed in such a manner as might have been expected from one of his talents and virtue. He contemplated with unwearied attention and ardent zeal the various beauties which marked the style

of different schools and different ages. It was with no common eye that he beheld the productions of the great masters. He copied and sketched in the Vatican such parts of the works of Raphael and Michael Angelo as he thought would be most conducive to his future excellence, and by his well-directed study acquired, whilst he contemplated the best works of the best masters, that grace of thinking, to which he was principally indebted for his subsequent reputation as a portrait-painter." [1]

Much, however, as Reynolds in his lectures inculcates the necessity of constantly copying the great masters—it appears that he did but little in this way himself. "Of the few copies which he made while at Rome," says Malone, "two are now in the possession of the Earl of Inchiquin, who married his niece, Miss Palmer, 'St. Michael the Archangel Slaying the Dragon,' after Guido, and 'The School of Athens,' from Raphael—both masterly performances." Rome at that period swarmed with those English connoisseurs and travellers of taste whom Hogarth so sharply satirized and hated so cordially; they were all anxious to have copies of favourite works made by an artist so able as Reynolds; he felt, however, the folly of multiplying pictures, and eluded their alluring offers. "Whilst I was at Rome," he says, "I was very little employed by travellers, and that little I always considered as so much time lost." [2]

[1] It was while studying in the Vatican that he caught the severe cold which brought on the deafness with which he was ever after afflicted.—Ed.

[2] In one of his Roman note-books is the following list of the copies of pictures he made at Rome:—

"*In the Villa Medici*, the 'Vase of the Sacrifice of Iphigenia.'

"*In the Corsini Palace*, April 16 (in the afternoon), 1750, 'Anno Jubilei.'

"1. A Study of an Old Man's Head, reading, by Rubens.

"2. April 17 to 19. A Portrait of Philip II., by Titian.

"3. April 20. Rembrandt's Portrait, by himself.

"4. April 21 to 23. St. Martino on horseback, giving the devil, who appeared to him in the shape of a beggar, his cloak. Captain Blackquier's P. An Old Beggar Man. My Own Picture. Jacamo's Picture.

"5. Began May 30, finished June 10. St. Michael by Guido. A foot from my own.

"6. June 13. The 'Aurora' of Guido, a sketch. June 15. Went to Tivoli. August 15. Worked in the Vatican."—Ed.

Of the character and course of his technical studies in Rome, he has left a minute account; which, however, is chiefly valuable to the student in painting—for the language is that of the craft. Having filled his mind with the character of the great painters, and possessed himself, as he believed, with no small portion of their spirit, he proceeded to examine into the mechanical sorcery of their execution, and to dissect the varied colours which were blended on their canvas:—"The Leda in the Colonna Palace by Correggio," he says, "is dead-coloured white, and black or ultramarine in the shadows; and over that is scumbled thinly and smooth a warmer tint—I believe caput mortuum. The lights are mellow, the shadows bluish, but mellow. The picture is painted on a panel, in a broad, large manner, but finished like an enamel; the shadows harmonize, and are lost in the ground.[1]

"'The Adonis' of Titian in the Colonna Palace is dead-coloured white, with the muscles marked bold; the second painting has scumbled a light colour over it; the lights a mellow flesh-colour; the shadows in the light parts of a faint purple hue; at least they were so at first. That purple hue seems to be occasioned by blackish shadows under, and the colour scumbled over them. I copied the Titian with white, umber, minio, cinnabar, black; the shadows thin of colour.

"Poussin's landscapes in the Verospi palace are painted on a dark ground made of Indian red and black. The same ground might do for all other subjects as well as landscapes.

"In respect to painting the flesh tint, after it has been finished with very strong colours, such as ultramarine and carmine, pass white over it very very thin with oil. I believe it will have a wonderful effect. Make a finished sketch of every portrait you intend to paint, and by the help of that dispose your living model; then finish at the first time on a ground made of Indian red and black."

[1] It is difficult to know what painting of Leda Sir Joshua here describes, Correggio's celebrated painting of that subject now in the Berlin Museum never having been, so far as it is known, in the Colonna Palace. There is a copy of this work in the Palazzo Rospigliosi at Rome. Possibly it was this that Sir Joshua thus studied.—Ed.

Through all his letters and memorandums there are scattered allusions to his favourite art, and the works of the chief masters; and opinions are given and a scale of comparative excellence laid down in a manner equally clear, candid and accurate. It is true that he dictates rules for the guidance of others which he did not follow himself. When he became acquainted with all the wiles and stratagems of position and light and shade, he could dispense with the practice of making sketches of portraits, and depend on his experience.

"In comparison with Titian and Paul Veronese," he observes, "all the other Venetian masters appear hard; they have in a degree the manner of Rembrandt—all mezzotinto, occasioned by scumbling over their pictures with some dark oil or colour. There is little colour in the shadows, but much oil—they seem to be made only of a drying oil composed of red lead and oil. There are some artists who are diligent in examining pictures, and yet are not at all advanced in their judgment; although they can remember the exact colour of every figure in the picture; but not reflecting deeply on what they have seen, or making observations to themselves, they are not at all improved by the crowd of particulars that swim on the surface of their brains; as nothing enters deep enough into their minds to do them benefit through digestion. A painter should form his rules from pictures rather than from books or precepts. Rules were first made from pictures, not pictures from rules. Every picture an artist sees, whether the most excellent or the most ordinary, he should consider from whence that fine effect, or that ill effect proceeds; and then there is no picture ever so indifferent, but he may look at to his profit."

On our English connoisseurs and travellers of taste he has written some sharp and just remarks. This country, at that period, and long after, exported swarms of men with the malady of vertù upon them, who brought back long lists of pictures, and catalogues of artists' names—and set up for dictators here at home with no other stock. "The manner," says Reynolds, "of the English travellers in general, and of those who most pique themselves on studying vertù is that, instead of examining the beauties of these

works of fame, and why they are esteemed, they only inquire the subject of the picture, and the name of the painter, the history of a statue, and where it is found, and write that down. Some Englishmen, while I was in the Vatican, came there, and spent about six hours in writing down whatever the antiquary dictated to them. They scarcely ever looked at the paintings the whole time."

Reynolds extended his inquiries amongst the remains of ancient art, and endeavoured to ascertain, by what he could glean from the classic writers, and by what he could discover in the remaining statues, how far the paintings of ancient Greece resembled those of modern Rome. His conclusions can only be considered as expressions of belief, on a subject with regard to which we have not the materials of certain knowledge. He stayed in Rome till his judgment ripened, and gazed on the productions of Raphael and Michael Angelo till the mercury of his taste rose to the point of admiration. He then concluded, that, as those works were the most perfect in the world, the paintings of antiquity *must* have been in character the same—in short, that the "grand style" had descended direct from Apelles to Raphael. From an anecdote in Pliny, of the painter and the partridge, he conceived that a lively copy of nature was held as a vulgar thing by the painters of Greece, and that they approached living life no nearer than the sculptor of the Belvedere Apollo. This theory, however, appears to be contradicted by the Elgin marbles, and by the poetry of the nation, which is full of graphic images of homely, as well as heroic life. These conclusions, and his constant admonition to study the "grand style," and think of nothing but what is heroic or godlike as a subject for the pencil, have helped to misdirect the minds of students, and beget a monotony of composition, through which nothing but strong and decided genius can break. Few men are born with powers equal to the divine grandeur of such works—and many a good painter of domestic life may attribute the laborious dulness of his historic compositions to the incessant cry of all academies about the study of the "grand style." Hear how Reynolds commends the absence of nature—

"Suppose a person while he is contemplating a capital picture by Raphael or the Carracci, whilst he is wrapped in wonder at the sight of 'St. Paul preaching at Athens,' and the various dispositions of his audience—or is struck with the distress of the mother in the 'Death of the Innocents'—or with tears in his eyes beholds the 'Dead Christ' of Carracci—would it not offend him to have his attention called off to observe a piece of drapery in the picture naturally represented?"

What is it that drapery ought to resemble—and wherewithal shall a man be clothed that his garments may not look too natural? The living St. Paul himself was under no such apprehension; nor is it recorded that he failed in any of his missions because the heathen paid more attention to his clothes than his eloquence. The sentiment and character of the figure will dictate the drapery, and when these are strong, and true, and natural, they will always predominate over the accessories. Had he advised to clothe a figure gaily or gravely, according to the style of the countenance and gesture, Reynolds would have spoken more in keeping with his own practice.[1]

He seems to have employed his time at Rome chiefly in studying all the varieties of excellence, and in acquiring that knowledge of effect which he was so soon to display. The severe dignity of Angelo or Raphael he had no chance of attaining, for he wanted loftiness of imagination, without which no grand work can ever be achieved; but he had a deep sense of character, great skill in light and shade, a graceful softness and an alluring sweetness, such as none have surpassed. From the works of Leonardo da Vinci, Fra. Bartolomeo, Titian, and Velasquez, he acquired knowledge, which placed fortune and fame within his reach;—yet of these artists he says little, though he acknowledges the portrait of "Innocent the Tenth," by the last-named of them, to be the finest in the world.

Few original productions came from the hand of Reynolds while he remained at Rome. He painted a noble portrait

[1] Reynolds certainly never meant that drapery or any other detail should be *unnatural*, as Cunningham seems to think; he only warns his pupils against making such things too obtrusive.—Ed.

of himself, and left it in that city: and he also painted a kind of parody on "Raphael's School of Athens," into which he introduced about thirty likenesses of English students, travellers and connoisseurs, and amongst others that of Mr. Henry, of Straffan, in Ireland, the proprietor of the picture. "I have heard Reynolds himself say," remarks Northcote, "that it was universally allowed that he executed subjects of this kind with much humour and spirit; yet he thought it prudent to abandon the practice, since it might corrupt his taste as a portrait-painter, whose duty it was to discover only the perfections of those whom he represented."

During the period of his studies at Rome, Reynolds was the companion of John Astley, who had been his fellow pupil in the school of Hudson. This was an indifferent artist and an imperfect scholar—for he would rather run three miles to deliver a message by word of mouth than write the shortest note; but his person attracted the notice of a lady of noble birth, who moreover brought him a very handsome fortune. Before his marriage, he was poor and nearly destitute; yet he had a proud heart, and strove to conceal his embarrassments. One summer day, when the sun was hot, and he, Reynolds, and a few others, were indulging themselves in a country excursion, there was a general call to cast off coats—Astley obeyed with manifest reluctance, and not until he had stood many sarcasms from his friends. He had made the back of his waistcoat out of one of his own landscapes, and when he stripped, he displayed a foaming waterfall, much to his own confusion, and the mirth of his companions.

From Rome, Reynolds went to Bologna and Genoa. He was not one of those artists who see—or think they see—through all the deep mysteries of conception and execution at a glance; he perused and reperused, and considered and compared with the assiduity and anxiety of a man ambitious to be counted with the foremost, and resolved not to fail for want of labour. He was more frugal of his remarks while at these cities than when he was at Rome; nor are the few which he did set down of any value, either to students or travellers. From Genoa he

proceeded to Parma, and this is his memorandum respecting the painting in the cupola of the cathedral.[1]

"Relieve the light part of the picture with a dark ground, or the dark part with a light ground, whichever will have the most agreeable effect, or make the best mass. The cupola of Parma has the dark objects relieved, and the lights scarcely distinguishable from the ground. Some whole figures are considered as shadows; all the lights are of one colour. It is in the shadows only that the colours vary. In general, all the shadows should be of one colour, and the lights only to be distinguished by different tints; at least it should be so when the background is dark in the picture."

From Parma, Reynolds travelled to Florence, where he remained two months, observing much, but committing few remarks to writing;—and from thence to Venice, where his stay was still shorter. This is the more remarkable, since the Venetian school influenced his professional character far more powerfully than all the other schools of art put together: and his silence concerning the excellences of the famous masters of Venice, and his short abode there, have occasioned some curious speculations.[2] It has been observed that Reynolds admired one style and painted another; that with Raphael and Michael Angelo, and "the great masters" and

[1] This is the celebrated dome-painting by Correggio representing the "Assumption of the Virgin," in which the figures rise as it were from a dark background into a perfect sea of light. In Reynolds's time it was probably in better preservation than now, and must have afforded a rare scope for study to such an observant artist. The influence of Correggio is often apparent in Reynolds's practice of chiaroscuro.—Ed.

[2] It is true that he only made a short stay in Venice, from the 24th of July to the 16th of August; but his note-books show that he made good use of his time while there. His Venetian notes are fuller and more technical than any others. He himself tells us of the method he followed in acquiring a knowledge of the principles upon which the Venetian masters worked: "When I observed an extraordinary effect of light and shade in any picture, I took a leaf out of my pocket-book, and darkened every part of it in the same gradation of light and shade as the picture, leaving the white paper untouched to represent the light, and this without any attention to the subject, or to the drawing of the figures."

This does not seem as though he were seeking to hide the means by which he acquired his skill, as Allan Cunningham accuses him of doing. —Ed.

"the grand style" on his lips, he dedicated his own pencil to works of a character into which little of the lofty, and nothing of the divine, could well be introduced. To have explained by what means or by what studies he acquired his own unrivalled skill in art, would have been more to the purpose than comments upon Correggio, or Raphael, or Michael Angelo. He has chosen to remain silent, and artists must seek for the knowledge which made the fortune of Reynolds elsewhere than in his counsel.

"After an absence," says Malone, "of near three years, he began to think of returning home; and a slight circumstance, which he used to mention, may serve to show that, however great may have been the delight which he derived from residence in a country that Raphael and Michael Angelo had embellished by their works, the prospect of revisiting his native land was not unpleasing. When he was at Venice, in compliment to the English gentlemen then residing there, the manager of the opera one night ordered the band to play an English ballad tune. Happening to be the popular air which was played or sung in almost every street just at the time of their leaving London, by suggesting to them that metropolis, with all its endearing circumstances, it immediately brought tears into Reynolds's eyes, as well as into those of his countrymen who were present." "Thus nature will prevail," adds Northcote, "and Paul Veronese, Tintoret, and even Titian, were all given up at the moment, from the delightful prospect of again returning to his native land." On his way over Mount Cenis, he met Hudson and Roubiliac hasting on to Rome. At Paris, he found Chambers, the architect, who afterwards aided him in founding the Royal Academy. Here he painted the portrait of Mrs. Chambers, daughter of Wilton, the sculptor, who was eminently beautiful. She is represented in a hat, which shades part of her face. The picture was much admired, and must have raised high expectations.

He arrived in England in October, 1752, and after visiting Devonshire for a few weeks, obeyed the solicitations of Lord Edgcumbe and his own wishes, and established himself as a professional man in Saint Martin's Lane, London.

He found such opposition as genius is commonly doomed to meet with, and does not always overcome. The boldness of his attempts, the freedom of his conceptions, and the brilliancy of his colouring, were considered as innovations upon the established and orthodox system of portrait manufacture. The artists raised their voices first; and of these Hudson, who had just returned from Rome, was loudest. His old master looked for some minutes on a Boy, in a turban, which he had just painted, and exclaimed, with the addition of the national oath—"Reynolds, you don't paint so well as when you left England!" Ellis, an eminent portrait-maker, who had studied under Kneller, lifted up his voice the next—"Ah! Reynolds, this will never answer. Why, you don't paint in the least like Sir Godfrey." The youthful artist defended himself with much ability, upon which the other exclaimed in astonishment at this new heresy in art—"Shakespeare in poetry—and Kneller in painting, damme!"—and walked out of the room. This sharp treatment and the constant quotation of the names of Lely and Kneller, infected the mind of Reynolds with a dislike for the works of these two popular painters, which continued to the close of his life.

He thus describes the artists with whom he had to contend in the commencement of his career. "They have got a set of postures, which they apply to all persons indiscriminately; the consequence of which is, that all their pictures look like so many sign-post paintings; and if they have a history or a family-piece to paint, the first thing they do is to look over their common-place book, containing sketches which they have stolen from various pictures; then they search their prints over, and pilfer one figure from one print and another from a second; but never take the trouble of thinking for themselves." From the reproach of dealing in long-established attitudes, Reynolds himself is by no means free; but he never copied a posture which he failed to make his own, by throwing over it the charm of a graceful fancy and the elegance of nature.

The contest with his fellow artists was of short continuance. The works which had gained him celebrity were not the fortunate offspring of some happy moment, but of one

who could pour out such pictures in profusion. Better ones were not slow in coming. He painted the second Duke of Devonshire, and this increased his fame. He next painted his patron Commodore Keppel—and produced a work of such truth and nobleness that it fixed universal attention. This gallant seaman in pursuing a privateer, ran his ship aground on the coast of France, and was made prisoner in the midst of his exertions to save his crew from destruction. He was released from prison, and acquitted of all blame by a court-martial. The portrait represents him just escaped from shipwreck. The artist deviated from the formal style of his rivals, and deviated into excellence. The spirit of a higher species of art is visible in this performance, yet the likeness was reckoned perfect.[1]

But so unsettled is fashion, so fluctuating is taste, so uncertain is a man of genius of obtaining the reward he deserves—so little can he depend upon the immediate triumph of intellect over pretension, that the popularity of any contemptible competitor annoys and disturbs him. So it happened to Reynolds. One Liotard, a native of Geneva, of little skill and of no genius, but patronized by several noblemen, rose suddenly into distinction and employment. Of this Reynolds spoke and wrote with much impatience and some bitterness. "The only merit in Liotard's pictures" (he says) "is neatness, which, as a general rule, is the characteristic of low genius, or rather no genius at all. His pictures are just what ladies do when they paint for their amusement; nor is there any person, how poor soever their talents may be, but in a very few years, by dint of practice may possess themselves of every qualification in the art which this *great man* has got." This is sufficiently severe—it is, however, just. The portraits of his rival were facsimiles of life—they had no vigour, no elegance, no intellect—they were minute without grace, and laboured without beauty. The friends of Liotard, finding that no honour was reflected back upon them by their patronage, withdrew their protection; his name sunk into silence, and he returned to the Continent,

[1] Reynolds executed several portraits of this brave officer. The best known is now in the National Gallery.—Ed.

leaving an open field and the honour of the victory to Reynolds—the first time that a British painter had triumphed in such a contest. He now removed from Saint Martin's Lane, the Grub Street of artists, and took a handsome house on the north side of Great Newport Street. His portrait of Keppel and his picture of the two Grevilles, brother and sister as Cupid and Psyche—and his success in the contest for distinction with Liotard—brought business in abundance, and his apartments were filled with ladies of quality and with men of rank, all alike desirous to have their person preserved to posterity by one who touched no subject without adorning it. "The desire to perpetuate the form of self-complacency," says Northcote, "crowded the sitting-room of Reynolds with women who wished to be transmitted as angels, and with men who wished to appear as heroes and philosophers. From his pencil they were sure to be gratified. The force and felicity of his portraits, not only drew around him the opulence and beauty of the nation, but happily gained him the merited honour of perpetuating the features of all the eminent and distinguished men of learning then living." It is not a little amusing to read Reynolds's lofty commendations of Raphael and Angelo—to observe how warmly he poured out his admiration over the severe dignity of their productions, and how enthusiastically he laboured to establish the serene majesty of the "grand style" in opposition to all other works; and then to look at him in his own person commencing the regular manufacture of faces as soon as he has leisure to establish himself. I sincerely believe, however, that in devoting his pencil to portraits he not only took the way to fortune, but followed the scope of his nature. He was deficient in the lofty apprehension of a subject; had little power in picturing out vividly scenes from history or from poetry; and, through this capital deficiency of imagination, was compelled to place in reality before him what others could bring by the force of fancy.

He was now thirty years old, his fame was spread far and wide, and the number of his commissions augmented daily. In the force and grace of expression, and in the natural splendour of colouring, no one could rival him;

success begot confidence in his own powers; he tried bolder attitudes and more diversified character, and succeeded in every attempt. A close observer of nature, he laid hold of every happy attitude into which either negligence or study threw the human frame. On one occasion, he observed that a noble person, one of his sitters, instead of looking the way the painter wished, kept gazing at a beautiful picture by one of the old masters. The artist instantly pressed this circumstance into service. "I snatched the moment," he observes, "and drew him in profile with as much of that expression of a pleasing melancholy as my capacity enabled me to hit off. When the picture was finished, he liked it, and particularly for that expression, though, I believe, without reflecting on the occasion of it."

Some time in the year 1754, he acquired the acquaintance, and afterwards the friendship, of Samuel Johnson. How this happened is related by Boswell. The artist was visiting in Devonshire, and in an interval of conversation or study opened the "Life of Savage." While he was standing with his arm leaning against the chimney-piece, he began to read, and it seized his attention so strongly, that, not being able to lay down the book till he had finished it, when he attempted to move he found his arm totally benumbed. He was solicitous to know an author, one of whose books had thus enchanted him, and by accident or design he met him at the Miss Cotterals in Newport Street. It was Reynolds's good fortune also to make a remark, which Johnson perceived could only have arisen in the mind of a man who thought for himself. The ladies were regretting the death of a friend, to whom they owed great obligations: "You have, however, the comfort," said Reynolds, "of being relieved from the burden of gratitude." They were shocked at this selfish suggestion; but Johnson maintained that it was true to human nature, and, on going away, accompanied Reynolds home. Thus commenced a friendship which was continued to old age without much interruption.[1]

[1] Johnson never seems to have said a morose word about Reynolds. He greatly admired the deaf artist's powers of observation, and once remarked, "When Reynolds tells me anything I am possessed of an idea the more,"—a rare tribute of praise from such a man.—Ed.

The rough and saturnine Johnson was very unlike the soft, the graceful, and flexible Reynolds. The former, the most distinguished man of his time for wit, wisdom, various knowledge, and original vigour of genius, had lived neglected—nay, spurned by the opulent and the titled—till his universal fame forced him on them; and when, after life was half spent in toil and sorrow, he came forth at length from his obscurity, he spread consternation among the polished circles by his uncouth shape and gestures, more by his ready and vigorous wit, and an incomparable sharpness of sarcasm, made doubly keen and piercing by learning. His circumstances rendered it unnecessary to soothe the proud by assentation, or the beautiful by fine speeches. He appeared among men not to win his way leisurely to the first place by smiles and bows; but to claim it, take it, and keep it, as the distinction to which he was born, and of which he had been too long defrauded. The course which his art required Reynolds to pursue, was far different from this. The temper of Hogarth had injured his practice in portraiture; the lesson had been recently read, and the prudent and sagacious Reynolds resolved not to drive fortune from his door by austerity of manners and surly and intractable independence of spirit. He who would succeed as a portrait-painter must practice the patience and the courtesy of a fine lady's physician. It is not enough to put the sitter into a suitable posture: he must also by conversation move him into a suitable mood of mind, and that natural and unembarrassed ease of expression without which there can be no success. He has, moreover, to keep him thus, throughout the whole of a tedious operation. No one will suppose that the difficulties are less with patients of the softer sex. To the vain and the whimsical, Reynolds opposed constant courtesy, and soothed them by that professional flattery to which they are generally accessible.[1] Disappointment and un-

[1] It was not so much flattery that Reynolds practised as an idealization of the commonplace. Never before had a painter exercised his art with such delicate perception and profound understanding as Sir Joshua. "No wonder," as I have written elsewhere, "that fair women and high-born men flocked to his studio, for while they saw their very thoughts, as

merited neglect had for ever roughened Johnson; his *trade* polished Reynolds. The flattery which the latter practised with his pencil helped to smooth his tongue; and I am surprised that Northcote, a man shrewd and observing, should have been unconscious of this, when he accuses the former of pride, envy, and vulgarity, and compares the discourtesy of his inquiring in the presence of the Duchess of Argyle, "How much, Reynolds, do you think we could win in a week, if we were to work as hard as we could?" with the graceful and accommodating manners of his old master. Reynolds, however—whether from that kind of feeling which induces one man to admire another for what he wants himself, or from a desire of profiting by the wisdom and the wit, the conversational eloquence and opulent understanding, of Johnson—cultivated the friendship of the great author assiduously and successfully:—and of the fruit which he derived from the intercourse he thus speaks in one of his "Discourses on Art."

"Whatever merit these 'Discourses' may have must be imputed in a great measure to the education which I may be said to have had under Dr. Johnson. I do not mean to say, though it certainly would be to the credit of these

it were, revealed, on his canvas, and their individuality fully preserved, they yet, at the same time, saw themselves, by the magic of his art, lifted above the region of commonplace into a realm of poetry and grace." "To wander through a gallery of his portraits," says a modern critic, "is to wander through a court where the manners are sweet, because of goodness, and graceful without effort, because the grace is inborn." Yet, strange to say, even with the most unpromising sitters, this nobility and effortless grace were never attained at the sacrifice of truth; not that Sir Joshua ever reproduced accurately, as photography now does, every little blemish and disturbing passion on the faces of his sitters. His was not the patient skill of a Denner, to count hairs and map wrinkles, but the deep insight of the true artist, who—

> "Poring on a face
> Divinely through all hindrance finds the man
> Behind it, and so paints him that his face,
> The shape and colour of a mind and life,
> Lives for his children ever at its best."

Just such a heritage has Reynolds left to the present generation—the portraits of its great-grandmothers and great-grandfathers, "ever at their best."—ED.

'Discoures' if I could say it with truth, that he contributed even a single sentiment to them; but he qualified my mind to think justly. No man had, like him, the art of teaching inferior minds the art of thinking. Perhaps other men might have equal knowledge, but few were so communicative. His great pleasure was to talk to those who looked up to him. It was here he exhibited his wonderful powers. The observations which he made on poetry, on life, and on everything about us, I applied to our art—with what success others must judge."

The price which Reynolds at first received for a *head* was five guineas; the rate increased with his fame, and in the year 1755 his charge was twelve. Experience about this time dictated the following memorandum respecting his art. "For painting the flesh:—black, blue-black, white, lake, carmine, orpiment, yellow-ochre, ultramarine, and varnish. To lay the palette: first lay, carmine and white in different degrees; second lay, orpiment and white ditto; third lay, blue-black and white ditto. The first sitting, for expedition, make a mixture as like the sitter's complexion as you can." Some years afterwards I find, by a casual notice from Johnson, that Reynolds had raised his price for a head to twenty guineas.

The year 1758 was perhaps the most lucrative of his professional career. The account of the economy of his studies, and the distribution of his time at this period is curious and instructive. It was his practice to keep all the prints engraved from his portraits, together with his sketches, in a large portfolio; these he submitted to his sitters; and, whatever position they selected, he immediately proceeded to copy it on the canvas, and paint the likeness to correspond. He received six sitters daily, who appeared in their turns; and he kept regular lists of those who sat, and of those who were waiting until a finished portrait should open a vacancy for their admission. He painted them as they stood on his list, and often sent the work home before the colours were dry. Of lounging visitors he had a great abhorrence, and, as he reckoned up the fruits of his labours, "Those idle people," said this disciple of the grand historical school

of Raphael and Angelo, "those idle people do not consider that my time is worth five guineas an hour." This calculation incidentally informs us that it was Reynolds's practice, in the height of his reputation and success, to paint a portrait in four hours.

His acquaintance with Johnson induced him, about this time, to write for the "Idler" some papers on exact imitations of nature and the true conception of beauty. These essays are not remarkable either for vigour or for elegance; they set nothing old in a new light. He claims for painting the privilege of poetry—in selecting fit subjects for the pencil, in imitating what is pure and lofty, and avoiding the mechanical drudgery of copying with a servile accuracy all that nature presents. He asserts that poetry is the sister of painting; that both exercise authority over the realms of imagination; and that the latter alone adds intellectual energy to the productions of fancy. Concerning our conceptions of the beautiful, he says that the productions of nature are all of themselves beautiful; and that custom, rather than the surpassing loveliness of particular objects, directs our admiration. He expended much thought in the composition of these papers; and, as they were required by Johnson to meet some sudden emergency, he sat up all night, which occasioned a sharp illness that detained him awhile from his pencil. In these essays, he urges his favourite theory of contemplating and practising the more grave and serenely poetical style of painting, and his love of the religious productions of the great apostles of Romish art is visible in every page. His remarks are deficient in that original spirit which distinguishes the ruder memorandums of Hogarth; and, what is odd enough, he seems to comprehend less clearly than the other the scope and character of the works of the great foreign masters, though he had lived long in daily contemplation of their productions.

Notwithstanding his professional diligence, and the time which he was compelled to yield to the attachment of friends and the curiosity of strangers, he found leisure to note down many useful remarks concerning his art; some of which seem coloured by the imagination or moulded by

the sagacity of Johnson. "The world," he says, "was weary of the long train of insipid imitators of Claude and Poussin, and demanded something new; Salvator Rosa saw and supplied this deficiency. He struck into a new and savage sort of composition, which was very striking. Sannazarius, the Italian poet, for the same reason substituted fishermen for shepherds, and changed the scene to the sea. Want of simplicity is a material imperfection either in conception or in colouring. There is a pure, chaste, modest, as well as a bold, independent glaring colour; men of genius use the one, common minds the other. Some painters think they never can enrich their pictures enough, and delight in gaudy colours and startling contrasts. All hurry and confusion in the composition of the picture should be avoided; it deprives the work of the majesty of repose. When I think on the high principle of the art, it brings to my mind the works of L. Carracci, and the 'Transfiguration' of Raphael. There every figure is ardent and animated, yet all is dignified. A solemnity pervades the whole picture, which strikes every one with awe and reverence." No artist ever had a finer sense of excellence—could distinguish more accurately between various degrees of merit in all the great productions of the pencil, or lay down happier rules for composition. He probably never lived a day without thinking of Michael Angelo, Raphael, or Correggio; he certainly never wrote a professional memorandum without introducing their works or their names: a circumstance which blunts the sting of those lines in *Retaliation*—

> "When they talk'd of their Raphaels, Correggios, and stuff,
> He shifted his trumpet, and only took snuff."

The influence of an artist of commanding skill now began to be manifest: those who admired the moral scenes of the shrewd and sarcastic Hogarth, were no less delighted with the works of one who had all the grace and beauty which long acquaintance with foreign pictures had taught them to admire. It was pleasing to national pride to see an Englishman measure himself successfully with Lely or Vandyke; and personal vanity was hourly pampered by

his hand. Commissions continued to pour in—the artist engaged several subordinate labourers, who were skilful in draperies—raised his price in 1760 to twenty-five guineas, and began to lay the foundation of a fortune.

It has been said that Hogarth observed the rising fame of Reynolds with vexation and with envy; but of this I have observed no proofs, either in his works or in his memorandums; and as he was not given to dissembling, but a bold, blunt man, it seems likely that he would have taken some opportunity of expressing such feelings if they had really existed. The cold and cautious nature of Reynolds rendered him, in the opinion of Johnson, almost invulnerable;—but I think Hogarth would have found a way to plague even him, had he been so disposed. For the envy of Hogarth we have the authority of George Steevens, who lived near those times; but his assertion is to be received with caution, if not with distrust. He was no admirer of the man whose character he undertook to delineate, and in the same book, where he depreciated the dead, he defiled the living. Hogarth may have laid himself open to such a suspicion by the manner in which he opposed the foundation of public lectures, and the establishment of an Academy.

In the year 1760 a scheme, long contemplated and often agitated, was carried into execution—the establishment of an exhibition of the works of British artists. Concerning this undertaking Johnson thus writes to Baretti:—"The artists have established a yearly exhibition of pictures and statues, in imitation, I am told, of foreign academies. This year was the second exhibition. They please themselves much with the multitude of spectators, and imagine that the English school will rise much in reputation. Reynolds is without a rival, and continues to add thousands to thousands, which he deserves, among other excellencies, by retaining his kindness for Baretti. This exhibition has filled the heads of the artists and lovers of art. Surely life, if it be not long, is tedious; since we are forced to call in the assistance of so many trifles to rid us of our time—of that time which never can return."

One of the biographers of Reynolds imputes the reflec-

tions contained in the conclusion of this letter, "to that kind of envy, which perhaps even Johnson felt, when comparing his own annual gains with those of his more fortunate friend." They are rather to be attributed to the sense and taste of Johnson, who could not but feel the utter worthlessness of the far greater part of the productions with which the walls of the exhibition room were covered. Artists are very willing to claim for their profession and its productions rather more than the world seems disposed to concede. It is very natural that this should be so;—but it is also natural that a man of Johnson's caste should be conscious of the dignity of his own pursuits, and agree with the vast majority of mankind in ranking a Homer, a Virgil, a Milton, or a Shakespeare immeasurably above all the artists that ever painted or carved. Johnson, in a conversation with Boswell, defined painting to be an art "which could illustrate, but could not inform."

The catalogue to this new exhibition was, however, graced with an introduction from the pen of the doctor—which contains the following passage. "An exhibition of the works of art, being a spectacle new in the kingdom, has raised various opinions and conjectures among those who are unacquainted with the practice of foreign nations. Those who set their performances to general view, have too often been considered the rivals of each other; as men actuated, if not by avarice, at least by vanity, as contending for superiority of fame, though not for a pecuniary prize. It cannot be denied or doubted that all who offer themselves to criticism are desirous of praise; this desire is not only innocent but virtuous, while it is undebased by artifice or unpolluted by envy: and of envy or artifice, those men can never be accused, who, already enjoying all the honours and profits of their profession, are content to stand candidates for public notice with genius yet unexperienced and diligence yet unrewarded; who, without any hope of increasing their own reputation or interest, expose their names and their works only that they may furnish an opportunity of appearance to the young, the diffident, and the neglected. The purpose of this exhibition is not to enrich the artist, but to advance the art; the eminent are not

flattered with preference, nor the obscure insulted with contempt; whoever hopes to deserve public favour, is here invited to display his merit."

This is very specious and splendid; but the artists of fortune and reputation who planned and directed this work, were more likely to seek stations of importance for their own paintings, than to be solicitous about obtaining such for the labours of the nameless. Positions of precedence were likely to be eagerly contended for among the contributing artists; and it is probable that Johnson did not pen these conciliatory paragraphs without a secret smile.

In the year 1761 accumulating wealth began to have a visible effect on Reynolds's establishment. He quitted Newport Street, purchased a fine house on the west side of Leicester Square, furnished it with much taste, added a splendid gallery for the exhibition of his works, and an elegant dining-room; and finally taxed his invention and his purse in the production of a carriage, with wheels carved and gilt, and bearing on its panels the four seasons of the year. Those who flocked to see his new gallery were sometimes curious enough to desire a sight of this gay carriage; and the coachman, imitating the lackey who showed the gallery, earned a little money by opening the coach-house doors. His sister complained that it was too showy—"What!" said the painter, "would you have one like an apothecary's carriage?"

By what course of study he attained his skill in art, Reynolds has not condescended to tell us; but of many minor matters we are informed by one of his pupils with all the scrupulosity of biography. His study was octagonal, some twenty feet long, sixteen broad, and about fifteen feet high. The window was small and square, and the sill nine feet from the floor. His sitter's chair moved on castors, and stood above the floor a foot and a half; he held his palettes by a handle, and the sticks of his brushes were eighteen inches long. He wrought standing, and with great celerity. He rose early, breakfasted at nine, entered his study at ten, examined designs or touched unfinished portraits till eleven brought a sitter; painted till four; then dressed, and gave the evening to company.

His table was now elegantly furnished, and round it men of genius were often found. He was a lover of poetry and poets; they sometimes read their productions at his house, and were rewarded by his approbation, and occasionally by their portraits. Johnson was a frequent and a welcome guest: Percy was there too, with his ancient ballads and his old English lore; Goldsmith with his latent genius, infantine vivacity and plum-coloured coat, and Sterne with his witty and licentious conversation. Burke and his brothers were constant guests; and Garrick was seldom absent, for he loved to be where greater men were. It was honourable to this distinguished artist that he perceived the worth of such men, and felt the honour which their society shed upon him; but it stopped not here—he often aided them with his purse, nor insisted upon repayment. It has, indeed, been said that he was uncivil to Johnson, and that once, on seeing him in his study, he turned his back on him and walked out; but to offer such an insult was as little in the nature of the courtly painter, as to forgive it was in that of the haughty author. Reynolds seems to have loved the company of literary men more than that of artists; he had little to learn in his profession, and he naturally sought the society of those who had knowledge to impart. They have rewarded him with their approbation; he who has been praised by Burke, and who was loved by Johnson, has little chance of being forgotten.

He obtained the more equivocal approbation of Sterne, of whom he painted a very clever portrait, with the finger on the brow and the head full of thought.[1] The author of "Tristram Shandy," speaking of his hero's father, says, "Then his whole attitude had been easy, natural, unforced, Reynolds himself, great and graceful as he paints, might have painted him as he sat." The death of Sterne is said to have been hastened by the sarcastic raillery of a lady whom he encountered at the painter's table. He offended her by the grossness of his conversation, and, being in a declining state of health, suffered, if we are to believe the

[1] This interesting portrait is now in the possession of the Marquis of Lansdowne, who lent it to the second exhibition of Old Masters at Burlington House.—Ed.

story, so severely from her wit—that he went home and died. That man must be singularly sensitive whose life is at the mercy of a woman's sarcasm: the most of us are content to live long after we are laughed at.[1]

Reynolds's next work, "Garrick between Tragedy and Comedy," has been highly praised. Figures of flesh and blood, however, never work well with figures of speech. Shadow and substance cannot enter into any conversation: the player standing irresolute between two such personations is an absurdity which the finest art—and it is not wanting—cannot redeem. The soldier pondering between his Catholic and Protestant doxies, in Hogarth's "March to Finchley," is natural and irresistibly comic; but David Garrick between his shadowy heroines is another affair.

Reynolds meditated a larger and more elaborate work—a composition displaying Garrick in his various powers as a comic and tragic actor. The principal figure was designed to be David himself in his own proper dress, speaking a prologue. A little retired were to appear groups of figures in the costume and character of the various heroes, from Hamlet down to Abel Drugger, in the representation of which the actor had obtained his fame. All these were to be portraits, gently modified according to character. This idea was never probably sketched; it seems strange and unnatural; there could be no unity, as they were all individual personations, which fitted each other in the ludicrous manner of the scraps composing a medley. Garrick, however, who laboured under a double load of vanity as actor and author, was charmed with the idea, and cried out, "That will be the very thing which I desire: the only way, ———, that I can be handed down to posterity."

While this eminent actor's portrait was in progress, he mentioned to Reynolds that he once sat to Gainsborough, whose talents he did not admire, and whom he puzzled

[1] To poor Sterne there is an inglorious memorial among the nettles of Bayswater burial-ground—a wretched headstone, inscribed with the more wretched rhymes of a tippling fraternity of Freemasons. The worst is not yet told: his body was sold by his landlady to defray his lodgings, and was recognized on the dissecting-table by one who had caroused with him, and enjoyed his witty and licentious conversation.

by altering the expression of his face. Every time the artist turned his back the actor put on a change of countenance, till the former in a passion dashed his pencils on the floor, and cried, "I believe I am painting from the devil rather than from a man." He sat often to Reynolds for different portraits: and on one of these occasions complained wofully of the unceasing sarcasms of Foote. "Never mind him," replied the shrewd painter—"he only shows his sense of his own inferiority: it is ever the least in talent who becomes malignant and abusive."

In the year 1762, the health of Reynolds having been impaired by constant labour, he went into Devonshire, accompanied by Johnson. He was welcomed with something of a silent approbation; for the populace of England know little, and care less, about either painting or poetry, or any such matters. The applause, too, of a man's native place is generally the last which he receives; for those who knew him in youth will not readily allow that in capacity he is superior to themselves, and are apt to regard the coming of his fame among them as an intrusion to be resented. But Reynolds was a man armed in that philosophic calmness which no disappointment could ruffle or disturb. He received a kind welcome from the learned and scientific Mudges, and was distinguished by the notice of all men remarkable for knowledge or station. A homage was paid him by one then young and nameless, who has since risen high. "Mr. Reynolds was pointed out to me (says Northcote) at a public meeting, where a great crowd was assembled. I got as near him as I could, from the pressure of the people, to touch the skirt of his coat, which I did with great satisfaction to my mind." All who have souls to feel the influence of genius, will applaud this touch of youthful enthusiasm.

A gentleman whom they visited indulged Johnson with new honey and clouted cream, of which he swallowed so liberally that his entertainer grew alarmed. To the prudent and discreet Reynolds the same person presented a large jar of very old nut oil—a professional prize which the painter carried home in his own coach, regarding it as worthy of his personal attention. He returned to London

restored to health, and recommenced his interrupted labours.

His commissions were now so numerous and important, that he found it necessary to have several young persons to aid him in the minor details of his undertakings. It is seldom, however, that pupils work sedulously for their master's benefit; and it is not to every one who cries "Go to—I will be an artist," that nature has been prodigal. One pupil took to drinking, and soon died: others in various ways annoyed and disappointed him. He was, however, a clear-headed man and a zealous instructor, and seems on the whole to have turned the skill of his young men to some account. He informed Johnson that he was obtaining by his profession six thousand pounds a year—a large income in those days, when portraits brought but twenty-five guineas each.

The Literary Club was founded by Johnson in 1764, and, amongst other men of eminence and talent, it numbered Reynolds. It is true that he assumed not to himself the distinction which literature bestows; but his friends knew too well the value of his presence to lose it by a fastidious observance of the title of their club. Poets, painters, and sculptors are all brothers; and, even had he been less eminent in his art, the sense, information, and manners of Reynolds would have made him an acceptable companion in the most intellectual society. He was, however, rather alarmed on hearing that people spoke of him as "one of the wits," and exclaimed: "Why have they named me as a wit?—I never was a wit in my life." Reynolds had other merits, not unworthy of the consideration of men so out of favour with fortune at that time as Johnson, and Goldsmith, and Burke. He had a heavy purse and an hospitable table.

In 1764 he was attacked with a serious illness, which was equally sudden and alarming. He was cheered by the anxiety of many friends, and by the solicitude of Johnson, who wrote from Northamptonshire—"I did not hear of your sickness till I heard likewise of your recovery, and therefore escaped that part of your pain which every man must feel to whom you are known as you are known to me.

If the amusement of my company can exhilarate the languor of a slow recovery, I will not delay a day to come to you; for I know not how I can so effectually promote my own pleasure as by pleasing you, or my own interest as by preserving you; in whom, if I should lose you, I should lose almost the only man whom I can call a friend." He to whom Johnson could thus write must have possessed many noble qualities; for no one could estimate human nature more truly than that illustrious man. Our artist recovered slowly and resumed his studies. The same year which alarmed England respecting the health of Reynolds, deprived it of Hogarth.

Lady Sarah Bunbury sacrificing to the Graces, Lady Elizabeth Keppel in the dress she wore when bridesmaid to the Queen, and Lady Waldegrave—one of the beauties of the day—appeared from Reynolds's pencil in 1765, and were regarded by Barry as among the happiest of his works. He commended them for the greatness of the style, the propriety of the characters, the force of light and shade, and the delicacy of the colouring.

Artists of eminence now rose thick and fast. Barry had made his appearance under the affectionate patronage of Edmund Burke. West landed from Italy to exhibit himself in the character of an historical painter; and the names of others, of scarcely less note, began to be heard of. But the ascendancy of Reynolds was still maintained: he had charmed effectually the public eye; and kept the world chained to him by the strong and enduring link of vanity.

To the SHAKESPEARE of Johnson, published in 1765, Reynolds furnished some notes, which show his good sense and good feeling, and are deficient only where no one could have expected him to excel—in black-letter reading and old dramatic lore. He had neither the daring ingenuity of a Warburton, nor the philosophical sagacity of a Johnson; but he tasted with as deep a feeling as either the rich excellence of the great dramatist.

From this period to the establishment of the Royal Academy in 1768, Reynolds applied himself diligently to portraiture, and, though he produced few works wherein

fancy mingled with and cheated reality, he executed many fine likenesses, among which that of *Mrs. Molesworth* is distinguished for ease and beauty, and the matronly grace and simplicity of costume. Ramsay, the son of a more distinguished father, Allan Ramsay, the poet, and Cotes, another painter of that time, had all the patronage of the court, and were in good employment. Walpole says of Ramsay, that he was the most sensible man of all living artists. Those men stood between Reynolds and royal favour; yet he painted in 1766 the Queen of Denmark, when she was about to go on her unhappy voyage. She seemed impressed with a presentiment of her coming misfortunes; for the artist always found her in tears. Of English artists Burke thus writes to Barry, who was studying at Rome:—"Here they are as you left them; Reynolds now and then striking out some wonder." He says in another letter,—"I found that Reynolds's expectation of what would be your great object of attention were the works of Michael Angelo, whom he considers as the Homer of painting. I could find that his own study had been much engrossed by that master, whom he still admires most. He confined himself for months to the Capella Sistina."

The Royal Academy was planned and proposed in 1768 by Chambers, West, Cotes, and Moser; the caution or timidity of Reynolds kept him for some time from assisting. A list of thirty members was made out; and West, a prudent and amiable man, called on Reynolds, and, in a conference of two hours' continuance, succeeding in persuading him to join them. He ordered his coach, and, accompanied by West, entered the room where his brother artists were assembled. They rose up to a man, and saluted him "President." He was affected by the compliment, but declined the honour until he had talked with Johnson and Burke; he went, consulted his friends, and having considered the consequences carefully, then consented. He expressed his belief at the same time that their scheme was a mere delusion: the King, he said, would not patronize nor even acknowledge them, as his majesty was well known to be the friend of another body—the Incorporated Society of Artists.

The plan of that Society (established in 1765) had failed to embrace all the objects necessary for the advancement of art; several painters of reputation were not of their number; and the new institution, now formed for the purpose of extending the usefulness of such a scheme, was the work of many heads. Much that was old was adopted, something new was added, and the whole was carefully matured into a simple and consistent plan. The professed objects were an academy of design for the instruction of students, and an annual exhibition, which should contain the works of the academicians, and admit at the same time all other productions of merit. The funds for the furtherance of this design were to come from the fruits of the annual exhibition. The King, who at first looked coldly upon the project, as it seemed set up in opposition to the elder society, on further consideration offered voluntarily to supply all deficiencies annually from his private purse. This enabled the members to propose rewards for the encouragement of rising genius; and at a future period to bestow annuities on the most promising students, to defray their expenses during their limited residence at Rome. Johnson was made professor of ancient literature, a station merely honorary—and Goldsmith professor of ancient history, another office without labour and without emolument —which secured him a place, says Percy, at the yearly dinner. Of this honour Goldsmith thus writes to his brother:—"I took it rather as a compliment to the institution than any benefit to myself. Honours to one in my situation, are something like ruffles to a man who wants a shirt." Lastly, the King, to give dignity to the Royal Academy of Great Britain, bestowed the honour of knighthood on the President; and seldom has any such distinction been bestowed amidst more universal approbation. Burke, in one of his admirable letters to Barry, says—"Reynolds is at the head of this academy. From his known public spirit, and warm desire of raising up art among us, he will, I have no doubt, contrive this institution to be productive of all the advantages that could possibly be derived from it; and whilst it is in such hands as his, we shall have nothing to fear from those shallows

and quicksands upon which the Italian and French academies have lost themselves." Johnson was so elated with the honour of knighthood conferred on his friend, that he drank wine in its celebration, though he had abstained from it for several years; and Burke declared there was a natural fitness in the name for a title. Of his election as president Northcote says, what I would fain disbelieve, "that he refused to belong to the society on any other conditions." How this is to be reconciled with his confusion and surprise at being hailed President, as above described, I cannot determine. The gentleman who relates it is cautious and candid, and not likely to hazard such an assertion lightly. Of Sir Joshua's capacity to fill the station of President, and to render it respectable by his courtesy and embellish it by his talents, no one ever entertained a doubt; but it was unworthy of him to stipulate for it, and I hope Northcote is for once mistaken.[1]

He voluntarily imposed on himself the task of composing and delivering discourses for the instruction of students in the principles and practice of their art. Of these he wrote fifteen: all distinguished for clearness of conception and for variety of knowledge. They were delivered during a long succession of years, and in a manner cold and sometimes embarrassed, and even unintelligible. His deafness, and his abhorrence of oratorical pomp of utterance, may have contributed to this defect. A nobleman who was present at the delivery of the first of the series, said,—"Sir Joshua, you read your discourse in a tone so low that I scarce heard a word you said." "That was to my advantage," replied the President, with a smile.[2]

[1] In a letter from J. Sheepe to Garrick, quoted in Leslie and Taylor's Life, it is said, "Sir Joshua has made it a condition of his acceptance of Presidentship that he should be allowed to paint the king and queen," and the King, we are told, promised to sit to him. Cotton also affirms that "the king and queen honoured Reynolds by sitting for their portraits this year, 1779." This seems to have been the only time that he painted their majesties. West, as we know, was the favourite at Court, and it was through his influence chiefly that the new Academy obtained Royal patronage.—ED.

[2] Allan Cunningham's slight commendation scarcely gives a fair idea of the high value of Sir Joshua's "Discourses" at the time when they

He distinguished himself in the first exhibition of the Academy by paintings of the Duchess of Manchester and her son, as "Diana disarming Cupid;" Lady Blake, as "Juno receiving the cestus from Venus;" and Miss Morris, as "Hope nursing Love." The grace of design and beauty of colouring in these pictures could not conceal the classical affectation of their titles, and the poverty of invention in applying such old and exhausted compliments. Poor Miss Morris was no dandler of babes, but a delicate and sensi-

were first delivered. At this time a merely arbitrary teaching of a few traditionary rules and practices was all that a student could hope to gain from an Academical course. These "Discourses" undoubtedly laid the foundation of a more scientific and systematic mode of instruction. "Read as a whole," writes Redgrave, "they are a body of sound precept such as no other school ever started with; and unless each artist is to begin from the beginning and ignore what has gone before, it will be no waste of time to study the art precepts of the great President, if it is only to test their truth by trying to confute them." This confutation it must be admitted is often enough supplied by the precepts themselves, for they are constantly contradictory one to another, but on the whole such a mass of careful observation and sound induction, had never before been gathered together since Da Vinci wrote the profound maxims of his "Trattato." Nor is the literary merit of the "Discourses" to be overlooked. Their style is so good and so carefully studied that at first it was supposed that Burke had aided the author in their composition, and Dr. Johnson also was charged with having written them, a charge which elicited the indignant rejoinder, "Sir Joshua Reynolds, sir, would as soon get me to paint for him as to write for him." Amidst the almost universal admiration that these "Discourses" have called forth, it is amusing to read the furious commentary that the ever eccentric Blake wrote upon them. "I consider Reynolds's 'Discourses,'" he says, "as the simulation of the hypocrite who smiles particularly when he means to betray. His praise of Raphael is like the hysteric smile of revenge, his softness and candour the hidden trap and the poisoned feast. He praises Michael Angelo for qualities which Michael Angelo abhorred; and he blames Raphael for the only qualities which Raphael valued. Whether Reynolds knew what he was doing is nothing to me. The mischief is the same whether a man does it ignorantly or knowingly. I always considered true art and true artists to be particularly insulted and degraded by the reputation of these 'Discourses;' as much as they were degraded by the reputation of Reynolds's paintings, and that such artists as Reynolds are at all times hired by Satan for the depression of art; a pretence of art to destroy art."

It is easy to understand the antagonism that the seething spirit of Blake would feel to that of the serene and successful Sir Joshua. The two men indeed were opposite poles both in their character and their art.—Ed.

tive spinster, unfit for the gross wear and tear of the stage —who fainted in the representation of Juliet, and died soon after.[1] Of Lady Blake's title to represent Juno, I have nothing to say—a modern lord would make an indifferent Jupiter; and what claim a Duchess of Manchester, with her last-born in her lap, could have to the distinction of Diana, it is difficult to guess.

Sir Joshua guided his pen with better taste than his pencil in the first year of his presidency. He, at the request of Burke, addressed a letter of advice to Barry, which made a strong impression on the mind of that singular man. "Whoever," says Sir Joshua, "is resolved to excel in painting, or indeed in any other art, must bring all his mind to bear upon that one object from the moment that he rises till he goes to bed: the effect of every object that meets a painter's eye, may give him a lesson, provided his mind is calm, unembarrassed with other objects, and open to instruction. This general attention, with other studies, connected with the art, which must employ the artist in his closet, will be found sufficient to fill up life, if it were much longer than it is. Were I in your place, I would consider myself as playing a great game, and never suffer the little malice and envy of my rivals to draw off my attention from the main object, which, if you pursue with a steady eye, it will not be in the power of all the Cicerones in the world to hurt you. Whilst they are endeavouring to prevent the gentlemen from employing the young artists, instead of injuring them, they are in my opinion doing them the greatest service.

"Whoever has great views, I would recommend to him, whilst at Rome, rather to live on bread and water than lose advantages which he can never hope to enjoy a second time, and which he will find only in the Vatican; where, I will engage, no cavalier sends his students to copy for him. The Capella Sistina is the production of the greatest genius that was ever employed in the arts; it is worth considering by what principles that stupendous greatness of style is produced; and endeavouring to produce something of

[1] On the very day on which this beautiful picture of her was first exhibited at the Royal Academy.—Ed.

your own on those principles, will be a more advantageous method of study than copying the St. Cecilia in the Borghese, or the Herodias of Guido, which may be copied to eternity without contributing a jot towards making a man a more able painter. If you neglect visiting the Vatican often, and particularly the Capella Sistina, you will neglect receiving that peculiar advantage which Rome can give above all other cities in the world.[1] In other places you will find casts from the antique, and capital pictures of the great painters; but it is there only that you can form an idea of the dignity of the art, as it is there only that you can see the works of Michael Angelo and Raphael." Barry, who at that time was awed by the fame of Reynolds, received this letter with thankfulness, and acknowledged it with civility; but his precipitancy of nature hindered him from profiting much by it.

When Dr. Goldsmith published his "Deserted Village," he inscribed it to Sir Joshua in a very kind and touching manner:—"The only dedication I ever made," says the doctor, "was to my brother, because I loved him better than most other men. He is since dead. Permit me to inscribe this poem to you." The poet was a frequent guest, with Johnson, at the table of the painter, which was adorned and enlivened by the presence and the talents of Miss Reynolds—herself a painter and poetess, and eminent for her good sense and ready wit. This lady was a great favourite of Johnson, who was fond of her company, and acknowledged oftener than once the influence of her conversation.

I have already said that Reynolds was an admirer of Pope. A fan, which the poet presented to Martha Blount, and on which he had painted, with his own hand, the story

[1] Sir Joshua is one of the very few English artists who have gone through the ordeal of early study at Rome without losing anything of their own individuality. This was probably due in a great measure to his avoidance of mere copying. He must partly be held responsible, however, for that straining after the grand style and "high art," as it was called, which proved such a stumbling-block in the path of so many of our English painters. He certainly inculcated this "stupendous greatness of style" by his teaching, though he did not reach after it himself in practice.—Ed.

of Cephalus and Procris, with the motto "Aura Veni," was to be sold by auction, and Sir Joshua sent a person to bid for it as far as thirty guineas. The messenger imagined that he said thirty shillings, and allowed the relic to go for two pounds; a profit, however, was allowed to the purchaser, and it was put into the hands of the President. "See," said he, to his pupils who gathered round him, "see the painting of Pope—this must always be the case when the work is taken up from idleness, and is laid aside when it ceases to amuse; it is like the work of one who paints only for amusement. Those who are resolved to excel must go to their work, willing or unwilling, morning, noon, and night; they will find it to be no play, but very hard labour." This fan was afterwards stolen out of his study; as a relic of that importance cannot be openly displayed to the world by the person who abstracts it, it is not easy to imagine what manner of enthusiast the thief could be.

At a festive meeting where Johnson, Reynolds, Burke, Garrick, Douglas, and Goldsmith were conspicuous, the idea of composing a set of extempore epitaphs on one another was started. Two very indifferent lines of ordinary waggery by Garrick, offended Goldsmith so much that he avenged himself by composing the celebrated "Poem of Retaliation," in which he exhibits the characters of his companions with great liveliness and talent. The character of Sir Joshua Reynolds is drawn with discrimination and delicacy; it resembles, indeed, his own portraits, for the features are a little softened and the expression a little elevated; it is, nevertheless, as near the truth as the affection of the poet would permit him to come. The lines have a melancholy interest, from being the last which the author wrote.

> "Here Reynolds is laid, and, to tell you my mind,
> He has not left a wiser or better behind;
> His pencil was striking, resistless, and grand;
> His manners were gentle, complying, and bland;
> Still born to improve us in every part,
> His pencil our faces, his manners our heart."

That he was an improver of human faces no one could be more conscious than Goldsmith; his portrait by Reynolds

is sufficiently unlovely, yet it was said by the artist's sister to be the most flattered likeness of all her brother's works.

In 1771 James Northcote became his pupil. Of which he thus speaks:—"As from the earliest period of my being able to make any observation, I had conceived Reynolds to be the greatest painter that ever lived, it may be conjectured what I felt when I found myself in his house as a scholar." He unites with Malone in assuring us that such were the gentleness of Sir Joshua's manners, the refinement of his habits, the splendour of his establishment, and the extent of his fame—that almost all the men in the three kingdoms, who were distinguished in literature, in art, at the bar, in the senate, or in the field, might occasionally be found feasting at his social and well-furnished table. The following description of one of the painter's dinners is by the skilful hand of Courteney:—"There was something singular in the style and economy of his table, that contributed to pleasantry and good-humour: a coarse inelegant plenty, without any regard to order or arrangement. A table prepared for seven or eight, often compelled to contain fifteen or sixteen. When this pressing difficulty was got over, a deficiency of knives and forks, plates and glasses, succeeded. The attendance was in the same style; and it was absolutely necessary to call instantly for beer, bread, or wine, that you might be supplied before the first course was over. He was once prevailed on to furnish the table with decanters and glasses for dinners, to save time and prevent the tardy manœuvres of two or three occasional undisciplined domestics. As these accelerating utensils were demolished in the course of service, Sir Joshua could never be persuaded to replace them. But these trifling embarrassments only served to enhance the hilarity and singular pleasure of the entertainment. The wine, cookery, and dishes were but little attended to; nor was the fish or venison ever talked of or recommended. Amidst this convivial animated bustle amongst his guests, our host sat perfectly composed, always attentive to what was said, never minding what was eat or drank, but left every one at perfect liberty to scramble for

himself. Temporal and spiritual peers, physicians, lawyers, actors, and musicians composed the motley group, and played their parts without dissonance or discord. At five o'clock precisely dinner was served, whether all the invited guests were arrived or not. Sir Joshua was never so fashionably ill-bred as to wait an hour perhaps for two or three persons of rank or title, and put the rest of the company out of humour by this invidious distinction."

Of the rough abundance which covered his table Courteney says enough; as to the character of the guests, we have the testimony of Dunning, afterwards Lord Ashburton. He had accepted an invitation to dinner from the President, and happened to be the first guest who arrived; a large company was expected. "Well, Sir Joshua," he said, "and who have you got to dine with you to-day? The last time I dined in your house, the company was of such a sort that by —— I believe all the rest of the world enjoyed peace for that afternoon." "This observation," says Northcote, "was by no means ill-applied; for as Sir Joshua's companions were chiefly men of genius, they were often disputatious and vehement in argument." Miss Reynolds seems to have been as indifferent about the good order of her domestics, and the appearance of her dishes at table, as her brother was about the active distribution of his wine and venison. Plenty was the splendour, and freedom was the elegance, which Malone and Boswell found in the entertainments of the artist.

The masculine freedom of Johnson's conversation was pleasing in general to Reynolds; it was not, however, always restrained by a sense of courtesy, or by the memory of benefits. It is related by Mrs. Thrale that once at her table Johnson lamented the perishable nature of the materials of painting, and recommended copper in place of wood or canvas. Reynolds urged the difficulty of finding a plate of copper large enough for historical subjects; he was interrupted by Johnson. "What foppish obstacles are these? here is Thrale, who has a thousand-tun copper; you may paint it all round if you will, I suppose it will serve him to brew in afterwards." When Johnson's pen was in his hand, and it was seldom out of it, he spoke of painting in another

mood, and of Reynolds with civility and affection. "Genius," he says, "is chiefly exerted in historical pictures, and the art of the painter of portraits is often lost in the obscurity of the subject. But it is in painting as in life; what is greatest is not always best. *I should grieve to see Reynolds transfer to heroes and goddesses, to empty splendour and to airy fiction, that art which is now employed in diffusing friendship, in renewing tenderness, in quickening the affections of the absent, and continuing the presence of the dead.* Every man is always present to himself, and has, therefore, little need of his own resemblance; nor can desire it, but for the sake of those whom he loves, and by whom he hopes to be remembered. This use of the art is a natural and reasonable consequence of affection: and though, like all other human actions, it is often complicated with pride, yet even such pride is more laudable than that by which palaces are covered with pictures, that, however excellent, neither imply the owner's virtue nor excite it." By an opinion so critically sagacious, and an apology for portrait painting, which appeals so effectually to the kindly side of human nature, Johnson repaid a hundred dinners.

Reynolds now raised his price for a portrait to thirty-five guineas, admitted some more pupils to the advantages of his studio, and leaving them to forward draperies and make copies of some of his pictures in his absence, made a visit to Paris. Of the object of this journey there is no account, nor has he made any note of his own emotions on observing the works of the French artists. He returned, and resumed his labours—which were too pressing to permit him to visit Bennet Langton, at his country seat—though they allowed him to obey the King's wish, and see the installation of the Knights of the Garter, in Windsor;—on which occasion his curiosity paid the tax of a new hat and a gold snuff-box, pilfered in the crowd.

Young Northcote acquired skill rapidly under Sir Joshua: he ere long painted one of the servants so like nature that a tame macaw mistook the picture for the original, against whom it had a grudge, and flew to attack the canvas with beak and wing. The experiment of the creature's mistake

was several times repeated with the same success, and Reynolds compared it to the ancient painting where a bunch of grapes allured the birds: "I see" (said he) "that birds and beasts are as good judges of pictures as men."

The Ugolino was painted in 1773.[1] The subject is contained in the "Commedia" of Dante, and is said by Cumberland to have been suggested to our artist by Goldsmith. The merit lies in the execution; and even this seems of disputable excellence. The lofty and stern sufferer of Dante appears on Reynolds's canvas like a famished mendicant, deficient in any commanding qualities of intellect, and regardless of his dying children, who cluster around his knees. It is indeed a subject too painful to contemplate; it has a feeling too deep for art, and certainly demanded a hand conversant with severer things than the lips and necks of ladies, and the well-dressed gentlemen of England. It is said to have affected Captain Cooke's Omiah so much, that he imagined it a scene of real distress, and ran to support the expiring child. The Duke of Dorset paid the artist four hundred guineas, and took home the picture. His next piece, the "Children in the Wood," arose from an accident. A beggar's infant, who was his model for some other picture, overpowered by continuing long in one position, fell asleep and presented the image of one of the babes, which he immediately secured. No sooner had he done this than the child turned in its sleep, and presented the idea of the other babe, which he instantly sketched, and from them afterwards made the finished picture. Accident often supplies what study cannot find; for nature, when unrestrained, throws itself into positions of great ease and elegance.[2]

In the month of July he visited Oxford, where he was received with some distinction, and admitted to the honorary degree of Doctor of Civil Law. At that period he was a member of the Royal, the Antiquarian, and Dilettanti

[1] Now in the possession of Lord Buckhurst. It was exhibited in 1873 at the "Old Masters" at Burlington House. Reynolds undoubtedly succeeded better in depicting the tragic muse than tragedy itself.—Ed.

[2] Now in the possession of the Right Hon. W. Cowper Temple. —Ed.

Societies. When he presented himself to the audience, and bowed, and took his seat, there was much applause: Dr. Beattie accompanied him and received the same honours. It seems a singular token of respect to salute a man with a title to which he can neither lay claim by his learning nor by his pursuits; but in our own time we have seen Blucher and Platoff dubbed Doctors of Law in the same venerable place. From Oxford Reynolds went to visit a noble duke, in compliance with many pressing solicitations: he hastened into his presence, and was mortified with a cold reception. The artist, it seems, had the incivility to appear in his boots!

On his return to London he painted the celebrated picture of Dr. Beattie in his Oxonian dress as Doctor of Laws, with his book on the "Immutability of Truth" below his arm, and the Angel of Truth beside him, overpowering Scepticism, Sophistry, and Infidelity. One of these prostrate figures has a lean and profligate look, and resembles Voltaire; in another, which is plump and full-bodied, some one recognized a resemblance to Hume; nor is it unlikely that the artist had Gibbon in his thoughts when he introduced Infidelity. The vexation of Goldsmith when he saw this painting overflowed all bounds. "It is unworthy" (he said) "of a man of eminence like you, Sir Joshua, to descend to flattery such as this. How could you think of degrading so high a genius as Voltaire before so mean a writer as Beattie! Beattie and his book will be forgotten in ten years; but your allegorical picture and the fame of Voltaire will live to your disgrace as a flatterer." There was as much good sense as envy in this. The picture was an inconsiderate compliment, and arose from the false estimate which Reynolds had formed of the genius of Beattie. The royal favour and the applause of the church are excellent in their day, and may float a man on to fortune; but posterity is an inexorable tribunal which overthrows all false estimates of character—all unsound reputations, and decides upon merit and genius alone. Hume, and Voltaire, and Gibbon—injurious as their works have been to the best interests of mankind—have survived the attack of Beattie, and the insult of Reynolds.

About the close of summer of 1773 he visited his native place, and was elected Mayor of Plympton—a distinction so much to his liking that he assured the King, whom he accidentally encountered on his return in one of the walks at Hampton Court, that it gave him more pleasure than any other he had ever received—"excepting," (he added—recollecting himself)—"excepting that which your Majesty so graciously conferred on me—the honour of knighthood."

The arts now met with a repulse from the church, which is often mentioned with sorrow by the painters, and even considered as an injury deserving annual reprobation. It happened that Reynolds and West were dining with the Bishop of Bristol, who was also Dean of St. Paul's, and their conversation turned upon religious paintings, and upon the naked appearance of the English churches in the absence of such ornaments. West generously offered his entertainer a painting of "Moses and the Laws" for the Cathedral of St. Paul, and Reynolds tendered a "Nativity." As this offer was in a manner fulfilling the original design of Sir Christopher Wren, the Dean imagined it would be received with rapture by all concerned. He waited on the King, who gave his ready consent; but Terrick, Bishop of London, objected at once, and no persuasion could move him, no arguments could change his fixed and determined opposition. A little of the old spirit, which ejected the whole progeny of saints and Madonnas out of the reformed church, was strong in this Bishop of London. "No," (said he,) "whilst I live and have power, no popish paintings shall enter the doors of the metropolitan church." The project was dropped and never again revived.

A portrait of Burke, which Reynolds painted at the request of Thrale, is the only reason that has ever been assigned for the hostility which Barry now began to show, first to Burke, and afterwards to Sir Joshua. Barry was a proud artist, and a suspicious man: he could not be insensible that the President had amassed a fortune, and obtained high fame in abiding by the lucrative branch of the profession, whilst he had perched upon the unproductive bough of historical composition, and had not been rewarded

with bread. He followed his own ideas in the course he pursued, but probably he reflected that he was also obeying the reiterated injunctions of Sir Joshua, who constantly, in his public lectures and private counsels, admonished all who loved what was noble and sublime to study the great masters, and labour at the grand style. This study had brought Barry to a garret and a crust; the neglect of it had spread the table of Reynolds with that sluttish abundance which Courteney describes, and put him in a coach with gilded wheels and the seasons painted on its panels. To all this was added the close friendship of his patron, Burke, with the fortunate painter. Barry fancied—in short—that his own merits were overlooked, and that something like a combination was formed to thwart and depress him. Nor is the mild and prudent Reynolds himself altogether free from the suspicion of having felt a little jealousy towards one who spoke well, and thought well, and painted well, and who *might* rise to fame and opulence rivalling his own.

Goldsmith was removed by death, in 1774, from the friendship of Reynolds, who was deeply affected; he did not touch his pencil for a whole day afterwards. He acted as executor—an easy trust—for there was nothing left but a large debt and a confused mass of papers. He directed his funeral, which was respectable and private, and aided largely in the monument which stands in the Poet's Corner of Westminster Abbey. Nollekens cut the marble: Johnson composed the epitaph.[1]

To the society called the Dilettanti Club some asc[illegible] the origin of all those associations whose object is the e[illegible]

[1] The friendship, or love, as it may almost be called, that existed between Reynolds and Goldsmith is a pleasant trait in the life of each. Reynolds never joined with Goldsmith's other friends in having a laugh against "poor Goldy," but was ever ready to show him kindness, both in word and act. His portrait of Goldsmith, as Leslie well remarks, is "ennobled by such an expression of dignity and tenderness as few but himself ever contrived to see in that oddly compounded but most touching face." He seems indeed to have thoroughly understood and appreciated Goldsmith's sensitive nature, and the uncouth poet was never more at home than with the courtly painter to whom he dedicated his "Deserted Village."—Ed.

couragement of art. To this club, as has been duly mentioned, Sir Joshua belonged, and to his pencil many of the members are indebted for the transmission of their looks —and names—to posterity. Those portraits are contained in two pictures, in the manner of Paul Veronese, and amount in all to fourteen. He was more worthily employed when Johnson sat to him in 1775: the picture shows him holding a manuscript near his face, and pondering as he reads. The near-sighted "Cham of literature" reproved the painter in these words—"It is not friendly to hand down to posterity the imperfections of any man." Mrs. Thrale interposed, and said—"You will not be known to posterity for your defects, though Sir Joshua should do his worst." The artist was right—he gave individuality and character to the head.

His practice introduced him occasionally to strange acquaintances. A gentleman, who returned rich from the East, sat for his portrait, but was called into the country before it was quite finished. He apologized by letter for his absence, and requested that the work might be completed. "My friends," said he, "tell me of the Titian tint and the Guido air—these you can add without my appearance."

Sir Joshua was chosen a member of the Academy of Florence, and in consequence he painted, and presented, a portrait of himself in the dress of his Oxford honours, which is placed in the Gallery of Eminent Artists in that city. This prudent Italian Academy requires by its laws the portrait of every new member, painted by his own hand; a regulation which has accumulated a very curious collection. Sir Joshua's performance raised the reputation of English art in Florence.

It was Sir Joshua's opinion that no man ever produced more than half-a-dozen original works in his whole lifetime; and when he painted the "Strawberry Girl,"[1] he said "that is one of *my* originals." On looking at this work it is not easy to see the cause of the artist's prefe-

[1] Formerly in the possession of Samuel Rogers, but now belonging to Sir Richard Wallace. It came to him from the Marquis of Hertford, who purchased it at Rogers's sale.—Ed.

rence; but genius sometimes forms curious estimates of its own productions—some lucky triumph over an obstinate difficulty—some work produced with great ease in an hour of enjoyment—or one, the offspring of much consideration, and the crowning of some new experiment, is apt to impress an idea of excellence on the maker's mind which his work fails to communicate to the cold spectator.

From secret envy he had not hitherto escaped; he was now to experience an open attack, and that from one of his own profession. A painter of the name of Hone—a man of some experience in portrait-painting, but of very moderate talents—sent to the annual exhibition, "The Pictorial Conjurer, displaying his whole art of Optical Deception." This was meant as a satire upon the style of Sir Joshua, and of the use which he was not unwilling to make of the postures and characters of earlier artists. The indignation of the friends of Reynolds was great—they rejected the offensive picture in the exhibition, and defended him with tongue and pen. "He has been accused of plagiarism," says one, "for having borrowed attitudes from ancient masters. Not only candour, but criticism must deny the force of this charge. When a single posture is imitated from a historic picture, and applied to a portrait in a different dress, this is not plagiarism, but quotation; and a quotation from a great author, with a novel application of the sense, has always been allowed to be an instance of parts and taste, and may have more merit than the original." The parallel entirely fails. To give a new turn to the sense of a sentence, or avail himself of a line or two from an early author, is allowed to a modern poet. But should he bring away an entire character, and employ it with the whole costume of thought unaltered, then he is a plagiarist; and such in many instances seems to have been Sir Joshua. His best defence is that he borrowed to improve, and stole that he might show his own power of colouring. Most of the songs of Burns, works unrivalled for nature and passion, are constructed on the stray verse or vagrant line of some forgotten bard. But then the poet only employed those as the starting-notes to his own inimitable strains, and never stole the fashion and hue of any entire lyric.

An attack such as that of Hone seemed to affect the friends of the artist more than it did himself; he said nothing, and the subject passed to oblivion. One of a more serious nature, and less easy to refute, was made in some of the public prints concerning the instability of the colours which he used in painting. He was accused of employing lake and carmine,—colours of a nature liable to speedy decay—and, in short, making frequent experiments at the expense of others. It was urged, that he knew those glossy and gaudy colours would not endure long; and it was hinted, that though the experiments which he made might be for the advancement of art, they were injurious to individuals, who purchased blooming works, which were destined to fade in their possession like the flowers of the field.[1]

'Of the danger of using such colours Sir Joshua was at length convinced; but not until strong symptoms of decay had appeared in many of his own works; as yet he zealously defended the propriety of his experiments with his pen as well as in conversation. In one of his memorandums he says, with much complacency:—"I was always willing to believe that my uncertainty of proceeding in my works—that is, my never being sure of my hand, and my frequent alterations—arose from a refined taste, which could not acquiesce in anything short of a high degree of excellence. I had not an opportunity of being early initiated in the principles of colouring; no man indeed could teach me. If I have never settled with respect to colouring, let it at the same time be remarked, that my unsteadiness in this respect proceeded from an inordinate desire to possess every kind of excellence that I saw in the works of others, without considering that there are in colouring, as in style, excellencies which are incompatible with each other. We

[1] Ruskin deems Reynolds one of "the seven supreme colourists of the world;" the other six being Titian, Giorgione, Correggio, Tintoret, Veronese, and Turner. He also says of him: "Considered as a painter of individuality in the human form and mind, I think him, even as it is, the prince of Portrait-painters. Titian paints nobler pictures and Vandyck had nobler subjects, but neither of them entered so subtly as Sir Joshua did into the minor varieties of human heart and temper."—*The Two Paths*, Lect. 2.—ED.

all know how often those masters who sought after colouring changed their manner; while others, merely from not seeing various modes, acquiesced all their lives in that with which they set out. On the contrary, I tried every effect of colour, and, by leaving out every colour in its turn, showed each colour that I could do without it. As I alternately left out every colour, I tried every new colour; and often, as is well-known, failed. I was influenced by no idle or foolish affectation. My fickleness in the mode of colouring arose from an eager desire to attain the highest excellence. This is the only merit I can assume to myself from my conduct in that respect." [1]

It is to be regretted that he continued these experiments for a long course of years, and that they infected more or less many of the finest of his works. He was exceedingly touchy of temper on the subject of colouring, and reproved Northcote with some sharpness for insinuating that Kneller used vermilion in his flesh-colour. "What signifies," said he, "what a man used who could not colour?—you may

[1] It is curious considering the secrecy with regard to his practice which is ascribed to Reynolds, that he should have left more detailed notes concerning it than almost any other painter. His experience is of the utmost value both as example and warning. In an excellent article on his practice in the "Portfolio," it is stated that he usually laid the foundation of his paintings in black and white, with sometimes a little red, making in fact nothing at first but a shaded drawing in oil, which he afterwards coloured by means of scumbling and glazing. He worked with very few colours, and was accustomed to gain his effects more by superposition than by mixture. "Apelles," he used to say, "was a good painter because he only used four colours." His palette at one time was simply composed of white, orpiment, yellow ochre, carmine, lake, ultramarine, blue-black, and black. But his "fickleness," as he tells us, was always leading him to make experiments, and some of these, it must be owned, were very disastrous. He never seems to have taken care that the vehicles he used should dry at the same rate, hence the liability of his pictures to crack and peel. "His egg varnish alone," says Beechey, "would in a short time tear any picture to pieces, painted with such materials as he made use of." He seems to have been of opinion, as he once expressed it to Sir George Beaumont, that "all good pictures *would* crack." All of his, however, have happily not done so, and when we consider the exquisite charm of colour he arrived at in so many of his works we may surely forgive him for a few fatal experiments. Even his faded pictures have a lingering beauty that we would scarcely exchange for the well preserved tints of any other master.—ED.

use it if you will."[1] He never allowed his pupils to make experiments, and on observing one of them employing some unusual compounds, exclaimed, "That boy will never do good, with his gallipots of varnish and foolish mixtures." The secret of Sir Joshua's own preparations was carefully kept—he permitted not even the most favoured of his pupils to acquire the knowledge of his colours—he had all securely locked, and allowed no one to enter where these treasures were deposited. What was the use of all this secrecy?—those who stole the mystery of his colours could not use it unless they stole his skill and talent also. A man who, like Reynolds, chooses to take upon himself the double office of public and private instructor of students in painting, ought not, surely, to retain to himself a secret in the art which he considers to be of real value.

He was fond of seeking into the secrets of the old painters; and dissected some of their performances without remorse or scruple, to ascertain their mode of laying on colour and finishing with effect. Titian he conceived to be the great master-spirit in portraiture; and no enthusiast in usury ever sought more incessantly for the secret of the philosopher's stone, than did Reynolds to possess himself of the whole theory and practice of the Venetian. But this was a concealed pursuit; he disclosed his discoveries to none; he lectured on Michael Angelo, and discoursed on Raphael; but he studied and dreamed of Titian. "To possess," said the artist, "a real fine picture by that great master, I would sell all my gallery—I would willingly ruin myself." The capital old paintings of the Venetian school which Sir Joshua's experiments destroyed, were not few, and it may be questioned if his discoveries were a compensation for their loss. The wilful destruction of a work of genius is a sort of murder, committed for the sake of art; and the propriety of the act is very questionable.[2] "I considered myself," said he in a private memo-

[1] Yet he used it himself, at times, but generally only mixed with white or thinly as a stain.—Ed.

[2] This reads very much like "wilful" exaggeration. And the next paragraph seems quoted in order to imply that Sir Joshua bought these works for the purpose of destroying them, whereas it is evident he

randum preserved by Malone, "as playing a great game, and, instead of beginning to save money, I laid it out as fast as I got it in purchasing the best examples of art; I even borrowed money for this purpose. The possessing portraits by Titian, Vandyke, Rembrandt, &c., I considered as the best kind of wealth. By this kind of contemplation we are taught to think in their way, and sometimes to attain their excellence. If I had never seen any of the works of Correggio, I should never, perhaps, have remarked in nature the expression which I find in one of his pieces: or, if I had remarked it, I might have thought it too difficult, or perhaps impossible, to be executed."

In the summer of 1776, Northcote informed Sir Joshua of his intention of visiting Italy, to confirm his own notions of excellence by studying in the Vatican. This communication, which deprived him of a profitable assistant, was received with much complacency; he was sensible of the advantages obtained from his pupil's pencil, and said so with much freedom and kindness. "Remember," said the master to his departing friend, "that something more must be done than that which did formerly—Kneller, Lely, and Hudson will not do now." He seldom omitted an opportunity of insulting the memories of Kneller and Lely. He might have spared them, now that the world admitted him to have excelled them.

Reynolds was skilful in compliments. When he painted the portrait of Mrs. Siddons as the Tragic Muse, he wrought his name on the border of her robe. The great actress, conceiving it to be a piece of classic embroidery, went near to examine, and seeing the words, smiled. The artist bowed and said, "I could not lose this opportunity of sending my name to posterity on the hem of your garment." He painted his name, in the same manner, on the embroidered edge of the drapery of Lady Cockburn's portrait. When this picture was taken into the exhibition room, such was the sweetness of the conception, and the splendour of the colouring, that the painters, who were busied with their own performances, acknowledged its beauty by clapping

bought them as an investment, both as regards money and knowledge.—Ed.

their hands. Such eager admiration is of rare occurrence amongst brothers of the trade.

The tardy praise which he wrung from artists was amply compensated by that of others. The surly applause of Johnson, and the implied admiration of Goldsmith, were nothing compared to the open and avowed approbation of Burke. That extraordinary man possessed a natural sagacity, which opened the door of every mystery in art or literature; his praise is always warm, but well placed: he feels wisely and thinks in the true spirit. His debt of gratitude to Sir Joshua was never liquidated by affected rapture. The artist had reason to be proud of the affection of Burke. He sometimes asked his opinion on the merit of a work—it was given readily—Sir Joshua would then shake his head and say, "Well, it pleases you; but it does not please me; there is a sweetness wanting in the expression which a little pains will bestow—there! I have improved it." This, when translated into the common language of life, means, "I must not let this man think that he is as wise as myself; but show him that I can reach one step at least higher than his admiration."

That Reynolds was a close observer of nature, his works sufficiently show; he drew his excellence from innumerable sources; paid attention to all opinions; from the rudest minds he sometimes obtained valuable hints, and babes and sucklings were among his tutors. It was one of his maxims that the gestures of children, being all dictated by nature, are graceful; and that affectation and distortion come in with the dancing-master. He watched the motions of the children who came to his gallery, and was pleased when he saw them forget themselves, and mimic unconsciously the airs and attitudes of the portraits on the wall. They were to him more than Raphael had ever been. "I cannot but think," he thus expresses himself in one of his memorandums, "that Apelles's method of exposing his pictures for public criticism was a very good one. I do not know why the judgment of the vulgar, on the mechanical parts of painting, should not be as good as any whatever; for instance, as to whether such or such a part be natural or not. If one of these persons should ask why

half the face is black, or why there is such a spot of black or snuff as they will call it, under the nose, I should conclude from thence that the shadows are thick or dirtily painted, or that the shadow under the nose was too much resembling snuff, when, if those shadows had exactly resembled the transparency and colour of nature, they would have no more been taken notice of than the shadow in nature itself." Such were the sound and sagacious opinions of this eminent man when he sat down to think for himself and speak from practice.

He had a decided aversion to loquacious artists; and spoke little himself whilst he was busied at his easel. When artists love to be admired for what they say, they will have less desire to be admired for what they paint. He had, in truth, formed a very humble notion of the abstract meditation which art requires, and imagined it to be more of a practical dexterity of hand than the offspring of intellect and skill. He assured Lord Monboddo that painting scarcely deserved the name of study; it was more that sort of work (he said) which employed the mind without fatiguing it, and was thereby more conducive to individual happiness than the practice of any other profession. This Northcote pronounces to be the speech of a mere portrait-manufacturer; but genius, when congenially employed, is seldom conscious of exertion.

Dr. Johnson, when questioned by Boswell on the merit of portraits, said,—"Sir, their chief excellence is being like; I would have them in the dress of their times, to preserve the accuracy of history—truth, sir, is of the greatest value in these things." To give the exact form and presence of the man, and animate him with his natural portion of intellect, and no more, requires a skilful hand, and a head which the love of flattering is unable to seduce from the practice of the truth. To paint a likeness is, however, a very common effort of a very common mind; but to bestow proper expression, just character, and unstudied ease, is infinitely difficult. Reynolds said he could teach any boy whom chance might throw in his way to paint a likeness. "To paint like Velasquez is another thing. He did at once, and with ease, what we cannot accomplish with time and

labour. Portraits, as well as written characters of men, should be decidedly marked, otherwise they will be insipid, and truth should be preferred before freedom of hand."

In 1777 he had delivered seven discourses on art, which he collected into a volume, and, that they might want no attraction to recommend them to popularity, he inscribed them to the King in a dedication written with care and caution, and neither deficient in self-approbation, nor unadorned by classical allusion.

He was an ardent lover of his profession, and ever as ready to defend it when assailed, as to add to its honours by the works of his hands. Dr. Tucker, the famous Dean of Gloucester, asserted before the Society for encouraging Commerce and Manufactures, that a pin-maker was a more useful and valuable member of society than Raphael. When Sir Joshua was informed of this he was nettled, and said with some asperity—"That is an observation of a very narrow mind; a mind that is confined to the mere object of commerce—that sees with a microscopic eye but a part of the great machine of the economy of life, and thinks that small part which he sees to be the whole. Commerce is the means not the end of happiness or pleasure: the end is a rational enjoyment by means of arts and sciences. It is therefore the highest degree of folly to set the means in a higher rank of esteem than the end. It is as much as to say, that the brickmaker is superior to the architect."

Sir Joshua now painted another portrait of Johnson at the request of Mr. Thrale.[1] [2] This seems to have been accomplished without any of those bickerings which distinguished the former sittings. Reynolds observed once to an acquaintance, that knowledge was not the only advantage to be obtained in the company of such a man—that the importance of truth and the baseness of falsehood were inculcated more by example than by precept, and that all who

[1] This picture is now in the collection of Richard Sharp, Esq., M.P., in Park Lane; as are also Reynolds's portraits of Burke and himself, which originally hung with it in the worthy brewer's dining-room at Streatham.

[2] The picture here referred to is probably the one now in the National Collection. It was purchased with the Peel pictures in 1871.—Ed.

were of the Johnsonian school were remarkable for a love of truth and accuracy. One day Boswell was speaking in high commendation of the Doctor's skill and felicity in drawing characters: Sir Joshua said—"He is undoubtedly admirable in this; but, in order to mark the characters which he draws, he overcharges them, and gives people more than they have, whether of good or bad." It would be difficult to express more neatly and simply the character of our artist's style of portraiture. He bestowed beauty and mind with no sparing hand. Every captain has the capacity of a general, and every lord a soul fit for wielding the energies of an empire.

Reynolds was now fifty-four years old—he had acquired fame and amassed a fortune—yet such was his unabated activity, that he continued to paint with the avidity of one labouring for bread; nor is there any proof that he even wished to confine himself to personages of note and talent. He raised his price to fifty guineas, without lessening the number of his commissions: he was in the wane of life; the wise were anxious to secure as many proofs of his genius as they could before he went—and the rich were glad of the increased price, for it excluded the poor from indulging in the luxury of vanity.

This fortunate man began now to have warnings of the kind which wait plentifully on advancing years. Goldsmith had gone, Garrick followed—and bodily decay was visibly creeping over Johnson. Reynolds himself—a frugal liver and a cautious man—was still hale and robust; he had painted one generation, was painting a second, and, in the opinion of the third, he promised to last to give them the benefit of his skill. He had no thought, indeed, of retiring to spend in leisure the money he had gathered: painting was to him enjoyment; and he knew that, if he withdrew from the scene, much of his social distinction would fall from about him. The powerful and the rich are soon willing to forget men of genius when they cease to minister to their vanity or their pleasures, and are no longer the talk of the town. Reynolds was aware of this—no one had yet appeared capable of disputing with him the title of first portrait-painter of the age:—with this spell

he had opened the doors as well as the purses of the proud and the far-descended, and taken his seat among the eminent of the land: and here he was resolved to remain.

In the year 1780 the Royal Academy was removed to Somerset House—rooms were prepared for the reception of the paintings—and models and apartments selected for the keeper and the secretary. Sir Joshua taxed his invention in the embellishment of the ceiling of the library, and could think of nothing better than Theory sitting on a cloud—a figure dark and mystical, which fails to explain its own meaning—nor is the meaning much to the purpose when it is explained. To the exhibition of this year he sent the portrait of Miss Beauclerc as Spencer's "Una"—and the heads of Gibbon the historian and Lady Beaumont. He also painted for the Royal Academy the portrait of Sir William Chambers, and that likeness of himself which contains the bust of Michael Angelo. It was one of the pleasant delusions of his life that the divinity of Michael Angelo inspired him in his productions—he was ever calling on his name—invoking him by his works—and making five guineas an hour in the belief that the severe majesty of Buonarotti was at least dimly seen among the curls and flounces, laced waistcoats, and well-powdered wigs of his English nobility.

He was questioned by Northcote on the merits of two French portraits by Madame Le Brun, which were then exhibited in London: "Pray what do you think of them, Sir Joshua?" Reynolds: "That they are very fine." Northcote: "How fine?" Reynolds: "As fine as those of any painter." Northcote: "As fine as those of any painter! —do you mean living or dead?" Reynolds, sharply: "Either living or dead." Northcote: "Good God! what, as fine as Vandyke?" Reynolds: "Yes, and finer." Reynolds had seen—as men see now—the wreck of high hopes and lofty expectations; he rated vulgar popularity at its worth, and disdained to interfere with the brief summer of Madame Le Brun.

A series of allegorical figures for the window of New College Chapel at Oxford employed his pencil during the year 1780, and for several succeeding years. There are

seven personifications in all—Faith, Hope, Charity, Temperance, Fortitude, Justice, and Prudence. That Reynolds has conferred a healthier hue and more splendid colours on those seven abstract personages than some of them enjoyed before, I readily allow; but they are a cold and unnatural progeny, and are regarded only as embellishments. Without nature there can be no sentiment—without flesh and blood there can be no sympathy. In the group of Charity, a critic discovers that the "fondling of the infant, the importunity of the boy, and the placid affection of the girl, together with the divided attention of the mother, are all distinguishably and judiciously marked with the knowledge of character for which the great artist who gave this design is so justly celebrated." This passage has surely been written to show how prettily words may be grouped together without meaning. Where is the *charity* in a mother taking charge of her own children?

The "Nativity," a composition of thirteen figures, and in dimensions twelve feet by eighteen, was designed to surmount the seven "Allegories." This was sold to the Duke of Rutland for 1,200 guineas, and was burnt at Belvoir Castle, with many other noble performances. It had the fault of almost all Sir Joshua's historical works; it was cold, laboured, and uninspired. He had no revelations of heavenly things, such as descended on Raphael; the visions which presented themselves were unembodied or dim, and flitted before his sight like the shadowy progeny of Banquo. If angels of light, ministers of grace, and souls of just men made perfect, could have sat for their portraits, who could have painted them so divinely as Reynolds?

Having painted a "Thais" with a torch in her hand, a "Death of Dido," and a Boy hearkening to a marvellous story, and placed them in the exhibition, he set off on a tour among the galleries of the Continent. The fame of these three new pictures followed him. The "Dido," by the loveliness of her face and the rich colouring of her robes, drew immense crowds to Somerset House. Meanwhile he pursued his journey. He stopped at Mechlin, to see the celebrated altar-piece by Rubens, of which he was told the following story: A citizen commissioned the picture, and

Rubens having made his sketch, employed Van Egmont, one of his scholars, to dead-colour the canvas, for the full-sized painting. On this the citizen said to Rubens,—"Sir, I bespoke a picture from the hand of the master, not from that of the scholar." "Content you, my friend (said the artist), this is but a preliminary process, which I always entrust to other hands." "The citizen (said Sir Joshua) was satisfied, and Rubens proceeded with the picture, which appears to me to have no indications of neglect in any part: on the contrary, I think it has been, for it is a little faded, one of his best pictures, though those who know this circumstance pretend to see Van Egmont's inferior genius through the touches of Rubens."

At Antwerp he noticed a young artist named De Gree, who had been designed for the church, but loved painting more, and pursued it with success. He came afterwards to England. Reynolds generously gave him fifty guineas, which the young man, as pious as he was enthusiastic, transmitted home for the use of his aged parents.

When Reynolds returned to London he found that a new candidate for fame had made his appearance, and promised to become fashionable. This was Opie, who, introduced by Wolcot, and remarkable alike by the humility of his birth and the brightness of his talents, rose suddenly into reputation and employment. It is true that he had then but moderate skill, and that the works which the world of fashion applauded were his worst; but he was a peasant, and therefore a novelty; he could paint, and that was a wonder. So eager were the nobility and gentry to crowd into his gallery, that their coaches became a nuisance; and the painter jestingly said to one of his brethren, "I must plant cannon at my door to keep the multitude off." This fever soon reached its cold fit. But a little while—and not a coroneted equipage was to be seen in his street; and Opie said to the same friend, with sarcastic bitterness, "*They* have deserted my house as if it were infected with the plague." Sir Joshua, who knew the giddy nature of popular regard, and the hollowness of patronage, regarded all this bustle with calmness; nor was he at all annoyed when the young peasant was employed by the chief nobility

of England. He appreciated Opie's real talents, and, always willing to find a foreign forerunner for native genius, compared him to Carravaggio.

At the age of fifty-eight, and in the full enjoyment of health and vigour, Sir Joshua was attacked by a paralytic affection. His friends were more alarmed than himself, and Johnson, to whom at all times the idea of death was terrific, addressed him in a letter of solemn anxiety. "I heard yesterday (he says) of your late disorder, and should think ill of myself if I heard it without alarm. I heard likewise of your recovery, which I wish to be complete and permanent. Your country has been in danger of losing one of its brightest ornaments, and I of losing one of my oldest and kindest friends; but I hope you will still live long for the honour of the nation; and that more enjoyment of your elegance, your intelligence, and your benevolence, is still reserved for, dear sir, your most affectionate —SAM. JOHNSON."—Reynolds soon recovered from this attack.

A sense of the excellence of his works, or acquaintance with his bounty, obtained for him the praise of Wolcot, more widely known by the name of Peter Pindar. In the dearth of good poets and manly satirists this person rose into reputation. His works had a wide circulation; and he was dreaded by all who had a reputation which would pay for an attack. His commendation, however, was about as undesirable as his satire. In his eulogiums on Reynolds, he calls on Rubens and Titian to awake, and see the new master sailing in supreme dominion, like the eagle of Jove, above the heads of all other mortals. Those two great artists are in no haste to arise to behold the elevation of a maker of portraits, and are insulted by the poet and reproached with jealousy. Simple Portrait stands ready to be limned, and History sighs, anxious for his pencil. Such are the thoughts and many of the words in which Wolcot expressed his admiration of Reynolds. Nor was he much more successful when he condescended to treat of him in prose. "I lately breakfasted" (he says) "with Sir Joshua, at his house in Leicester Fields. After some desultory remarks on the old masters, but not one

word of the living artists—as on that subject no one can ever obtain his real opinion—the conversation turned on Dr. Johnson. On my asking him how the club to which he belonged could so patiently suffer the tyranny of this overbearing man,—he replied with a smile that the members often hazarded sentiments merely to try his powers in contradiction. . .I think I in some measure wounded the feelings of Reynolds by observing that I had often thought that the Ramblers were Idlers, and the Idlers Ramblers, except those papers which he (Reynolds) had contributed; and, further, that Johnson too frequently acted the reverse of gipsies; 'the gipsies,' said I, 'when they steal the children of gentlefolks, conceal the theft by beggarly disguises; whereas Johnson often steals common thoughts, disguising the theft by a pomp of language.'"

Sir Joshua, supreme head as he was of the Academy, and unrivalled in fame and influence, was doomed to experience many crosses and vexations; but his sagacious spirit and tranquil temper brought him off triumphant. Barry, a man of great natural talents, and one who flew a flight even beyond Reynolds in his admiration of Michael Angelo, differed with him in everything else. Becoming Professor of Painting on the resignation of Mr. Penny, he had it in his power to annoy the Chair, and was not slow in perceiving his advantage. Reynolds, in the performance of his duty as President, could not fail to remark how very backward the Professor of Painting was in the performance of his undertaking—he had not delivered the stipulated lectures—and he inquired if they were composed. Barry, a little man and full of pride, rose on tiptoe—it is even said he clenched his fist to give stronger emphasis to his words—and exclaimed, "If I had only in composing my lectures to produce such poor mistaken stuff as your discourses, I should have my work done, and be ready to read." To reply suited neither the dignity nor the caution of Reynolds. The world praised him for his mildness and moderation, and censured his fiery opponent, on whom they laid the whole blame of this indecent scene.

The reformation which the Emperor Joseph wrought among the monastic establishments, brought before the

public many of the productions of Rubens; and Reynolds, who seldom missed an opportunity of examining all paintings of eminence, went over to the Netherlands to see them. He remarked, on his return from his first tour, that his own works were deficient in force in comparison with those he had seen; and on his second tour, "He observed to me" (said Sir George Beaumont) "that the pictures of Rubens appeared much less brilliant than they had done on the former inspection. He could not for some time account for this circumstance; but when he recollected that when he first saw them he had his note-book in his hand, for the purpose of writing down short remarks, he perceived what had occasioned their now making a less impression than they had done formerly. By the eye passing immediately from the white paper to the picture, the colours derived uncommon richness and warmth: for want of this foil they afterwards appeared comparatively cold."

Mason, after having translated Du Fresnoy's "Art of Painting," laid it aside, and had nearly forgotten it, when it was brought into light and life by the inquiries and commendations and illustrative notes of Sir Joshua. He seems to have been desirous at all times of obtaining literary distinction for himself; or at least of obtaining the regard of literary men. It is true that some of his admirers claim the highest honours of literature for his "Discourses," which Malone, inspired by his friendship and his legacy, calls "The Golden Discourses." Others, like Wolcot, see an excellence in his casual essays which those of Johnson never attained; nor is Northcote willing to be behind, for, instead of Burke lending his aid to Reynolds in the composition of those far-famed "Discourses," he reverses the obligation, and insinuates that Burke had the help of Sir Joshua in writing his admirable admonition to Barry. To claims such as these it would be unwise to listen. Johnson and Burke were of a higher order of intellect than Reynolds, and displayed a mastery in every subject with which they grappled. Such men were much more likely to impart than receive aid from him in literary compositions; and there is nothing in the letter of Burke which required minute information, or a mechanical ac-

quaintance with the details of art. It discusses principles, not practice; and may justly claim the honour of being the most clear, sagacious, profound, and natural view of the true objects of painting which has ever been composed.

The notes which Reynolds added to Du Fresnoy may be dismissed in a few words. They are distinguished by their sagacity and knowledge—by their shrewd estimates of other men's merits, and by their modesty concerning his own. I have said that the President was frugal in his communications respecting the sources from whence he drew his own practice—he forgets his caution in one of these notes. He is speaking of the masters of the Venetian school, and says:—"When I was at Venice, the method I took to avail myself of their principles was this:—when I observed an extraordinary effect of light and shade in any picture, I took a leaf out of my pocket-book, and darkened every part of it in the same gradation of light and shade as the picture, leaving the white paper untouched to represent the light, and this without any attention to the subject or the drawing of the figures. A few trials of this kind will be sufficient to give the method of their conduct in the management of their lights. After a few experiments I found the paper blotted nearly alike: their general practice appeared to be, to allow not above a quarter of the picture for the light, including in this portion both the principal and secondary lights; another quarter to be kept as dark as possible; and the remaining half kept in mezzotint or half-shadow. Rubens appears to have admitted rather more light than a quarter, and Rembrandt much less, scarce an eighth: by this conduct Rembrandt's light is extremely brilliant—but it costs too much—the rest of the picture is sacrificed to this one object. That light will certainly appear the brightest which is surrounded with the greatest quantity of shade, supposing equal skill in the artist."

Reynolds was commonly humane and tolerant—he could indeed afford, both in fame and in purse, to commend and aid the timid and the needy. When Gainsborough asked sixty guineas for his "Girl and Pigs," Sir Joshua gave him

a hundred; and when another English artist of celebrity, on his arrival from Rome, asked him where he should set up a studio, he informed him that the next house to his own was vacant, and at his service. He could, however, be sharp and bitter on occasion. It is one of the penalties paid for eminence to be obliged, as a matter of courtesy, to give opinions upon the attempts of the dull. Sir Joshua had such visitations in abundance. One morning he became wearied in contemplating a succession of specimens submitted to his inspection, and, fixing his eye on a female portrait by a young and trembling practitioner, he roughly exclaimed:—"What's this in your hand? A portrait! you should not show such things:—what's that upon her head—a dishclout?" The student retired in sorrow, and did not touch his pencils for a month.

Allan Ramsay, the king's painter, died in 1784, and was succeeded in his office by Reynolds—the emolument was little, nor was the honour important. Wilkes, in his sarcastic attack upon Hogarth, confounds the station with that of the house-painter; in short, the place, having been filled by several inferior artists, had sunk into discredit, like that of city poet. The exertions of Burke in reforming the expenses of the royal household, had reduced the salary of the king's painter from two hundred pounds to fifty; and as Reynolds had no use for the money, and as the station could confer no new dignity upon him, he could have had no inducement to take it, save the desire of complying with the wishes of his benevolent sovereign.

He distinguished himself above all his brother artists in the year 1784 by his "Fortune Teller," his portrait of Miss Kemble, and his Mrs. Siddons as the Tragic Muse—all very noble compositions. The latter conveys a strong image of the great actress, as, in the fulness of her beauty and her genius, she awed and astonished her audience, making Old Drury to show "a slope of wet faces from the pit to the roof." [1]

[1] The original of this most celebrated painting is now in the possession of the Duke of Westminster, and forms one of the chief treasures of the Grosvenor Gallery. It is stated in a work called "Repton's Gardening," published in 1816, by a writer who says he was present at the time,

Amidst the applause which these works obtained for him, the President met with a loss which the world could not repair—Samuel Johnson died on the 13th December, 1784, full of years and honours. A long, warm, and beneficial friendship had subsisted between them. The house and the purse of Reynolds were ever open to Johnson, and the word and the pen of Johnson[1] were equally ready for Reynolds. It was pleasing to contemplate this affectionate brotherhood, and it was sorrowful to see it dissevered. "I have three requests to make," said Johnson, a day before his death, "and I beg that you will attend to them, Sir Joshua. Forgive me thirty pounds which I borrowed from you—read the Scriptures—and abstain from using your pencil on the Sabbath-day." Reynolds promised, and—what is better—remembered his promise.

We owe the discovery of an original picture of Milton to the sagacity of Reynolds. It had belonged to Deborah, the poet's daughter—had passed into the family of Sir William Davenant—and was found in the possession of a furniture-broker by a dealer in pictures, who sold it to Sir Joshua for a hundred guineas. It was painted by Samuel Cooper, the friend and companion of Milton, in 1653. Doubts were raised, and suspicions expressed, concerning the descent of this portrait; and it must be confessed that all such discoveries deserve to be inquired into by men acquainted with the frauds practised in art. The professional experience of Sir Joshua was the best security against imposition. He was satisfied of its authenticity, and defended it successfully in the "Gentleman's Magazine."

The works of Reynolds had long supplied daily food for those critics who swarm in the land—and scatter censure or praise at least as blindly as Fortune. He was now to be exposed to another of the same class, equally insidious and subtle—and coming in a graver shape—a biographer. With so little skill, however, did this literary undertaker

that Mrs. Siddons, on seeing her portrait, objected to the straight bands of her hair, and asked Sir Joshua to make it flow in more graceful ringlets, but he replied, "That without straight lines there might be grace or beauty, but there could never be greatness or sublimity."—Ed.

[1] We have noted Johnson's disclaimer as to the pen.—Ed.

make his approaches, that he at first impressed the artist with a notion, that his purpose was not to write his life but to take it. Now Sir Joshua had long indulged in the pleasing delusion, that Malone, or Boswell, or Beattie, or Burke, on all of whom he had showered favours, would perform in due time this friendly office. To them he had opened up all his knowledge, and for their use he had made memorandums concerning his practice, all calculated to direct the pen and shorten the labour of the biographer. But his chief dependence for his biography was on Burke, whose talents he rated even above those of Johnson, and whose services he sought to secure by a donation of four thousand pounds. The best laid schemes of mice and men, says the poetical moralist, are often frustrated, and so it happened here. Sir Joshua refused the humble in hopes of the high. When his pencil could no longer please, nor his pen sign away the thousands in his purse, he was neglected or forgotten by persons who had followed and flattered him.

Two pictures, differing much in character, yet of great merit, came from his pencil during the year 1785. One was "Love unloosing the Zone of Beauty"—a work which I cannot hope to describe in the language of discretion,[1] and the other was the portrait of the Duke of Orleans —infamous under the name of Egalité—of whom I cannot write with temperance.[2]

During the following year, he gave up his thoughts and time to a picture, commissioned by Catharine of Russia, and after long choosing, selected a subject at once common-

[1] This work, which seems to have shocked Allan Cunningham, is now in the National Gallery, having been acquired with the Peel Collection. There are several duplicates of it in private collections.—Ed.

[2] This picture was supposed to have perished in a fire at Carlton House in 1824, but a few years ago Mr. Redgrave, R.A., found it together with a portrait of the younger Duke of Cumberland among "some lumber" at Hampton Court. Both canvases were frightfully injured and charred by the fire, but it has been found possible to restore them, and they are now exhibited. Sir Joshua painted the Duc de Chartres, afterwards distinguished as Philippe Egalité, at the time when he was in England on a visit to the Prince of Wales, in 1785, as we find by an entry in one of his note-books: "1785, Sep. 13. Duke de Charter, £262." See "Academy," Dec. 19, 1874.—Ed.

place and obscure—"The Infant Hercules strangling the Serpents." He had imagined another and nobler composition—Elizabeth visiting the English Camp at Tilbury, when the Armada was on the sea; but he relinquished the idea, from a wish to paint something illustrative of the character and undertakings of the empress herself. Now, Catharine was a woman who loved nature, and had no taste for allegorical subtleties; and it is probable that her Russian connoisseurs never imagined that her actions were shadowed forth in a chubby boy choking two snakes. She rewarded the President, however, with fifteen hundred guineas and a gold box, bearing her portrait set in large diamonds. Beattie calls it an unpromising subject; Barry commends the light and shade; and Reynolds himself, on bidding it farewell, said, "There are ten pictures under it, some better, some worse." So many trials had he made—such had been his anxiety to produce a masterpiece. The same year he painted a more simple and more popular picture—a sleeping girl. So splendid were the colours in which this sleeping beauty was embodied, that they threw into shade all other works which were near it in the exhibition.

When Boydell, a name which all lovers of art have learned to reverence, projected an edition of Shakespeare, embellished with engravings from the ablest painters, he found Reynolds unexpectedly cold and backward. A sensible friend undertook the task of persuasion, and in the midst of his argument slipped a five hundred pound note into the artist's hand. This mode of reasoning was powerful; three pictures were promised, imagined, sketched, and painted. The first was "Puck, or Robin Goodfellow"—a singular and a happy production—the very image of that tricksy sprite—with a hand ready for pleasant mischief, and an eye shining with uncommitted roguery. This poetic picture is in a poet's keeping—that of Mr. Rogers.[1] The second was "Macbeth," with the witches and the caldron. The figure of the usurper is deficient in heroic

[1] Now in the possession of Earl Fitzwilliam, who purchased it at Rogers's sale for 980 guineas.

dignity; but there is a supernatural splendour thrown over the hags which cannot be contemplated without awe. The vivid excellence of Shakespeare, however, prevails against the painter; the conception is below the execution. The third and last was the "Death of Cardinal Beaufort," a work which has received the highest praise, and the deepest censure.[1] I cannot help regarding the conception as a failure. To augment the horrors of a guilty conscience, the artist has introduced a fiend, who posts himself at the dying man's head, and excites our disgust, and carries away our feelings from the departing sinner. Those who seek a justification of this in the poet will seek in vain: the lines quoted in its defence contain only a figure of speech; one of those bold figures in which the great dramatist loved to deal.

> "O thou eternal mover of the heavens,
> Look with a gentle eye upon this wretch!
> Oh, beat away the busy meddling fiend
> That lays strong siege unto this wretch's soul,
> And from his bosom purge this black despair."

Those who are unconvinced by these words may look for the fiend of the artist in the dramatis personæ of the poet. Opie praises this hideous and shapeless supernumerary as "one of the most signal examples of invention in the artist." The artist received a thousand guineas for "Macbeth," and five hundred for "Cardinal Beaufort." He took commissions of this kind with reluctance; his imagination was not a teeming one; he had numerous trials to make; success was never certain; and when he had finished his work, he found that the dead were but indifferent patrons; he complained, in short, says Northcote, that those subjects "cost him too dear."

Of his portrait of Eliott, Lord Heathfield, Barry says, "His object appears to have been to obtain the vigour and solidity of Titian, and the bustle and spirit of Vandyke, without the excesses of either." It is a noble and heroic head. There is a calm martial determination which corresponds with the rough aspect. He grasps the key of Gib-

[1] In the possession of Lord Lcconfield. Another copy in the Dulwich Gallery.—Ed.

raltar in his hand, and seems to say, amid the volleying smoke and fire, "This rock shall melt and run into the Mediterranean before I yield thee." [1]

Reynolds once observed that it was impossible for two painters, in the same line of art, to live in friendship. This was probably uttered in a moment of peevishness, when he had been thwarted by some brother of the calling, and was not intended for a deliberate opinion. It is, nevertheless, nearer the truth than the disciples of art are willing to admit. What is the secret history of the Royal Academy but a record of battles and bickerings, of petty disputes and trifling animosities? Hogarth lived before it was founded, an object of mingled envy and terror. Gainsborough disliked Reynolds—Reynolds had no good-will to Gainsborough—Wilson also shared in this unamiable feeling, and Barry was unwilling to forgive anyone who painted better than himself. These are masters and princes of the calling:—their open feuds and private warrings would fill a volume; the animosities of the lesser spirits are unworthy of notice.

Sir Joshua sat to Gainsborough for his portrait; before it was finished he was taken ill and went to Bath; of his recovery and return he gave intimation, but no notice was taken of it, and the picture was never finished. Some unnatural fit of good-will had brought them together:—on reflection they separated, and continued to speak of one another after their own natures; Gainsborough with open scorn, Reynolds with courteous, cautious insinuation. It is true, however, that they at length forgave each other—that Gainsborough on *his death-bed* made atonement for his opposition, and relinquished all dislike—and that of Gainsborough, after he was fairly in his grave, Reynolds spoke with truth and justice.

The President was persuaded about this time by Boswell to attend the execution of a robber at Newgate. The unfortunate sufferer had been a servant in the family of Thrale, had often stood behind Sir Joshua's back; and, on seeing

[1] Everyone knows this fine picture in the National Gallery. It was originally painted for Boydell, and came with the Angerstein collection into the National Gallery.—Ed.

him in the crowd, bowed to him with mournful civility. A hero dying in battle, or a saint in his bed, may be worthy of contemplation; but what a Reynolds could have looked for, except disgust and sickness of heart, in witnessing the mortal agony of a vulgar malefactor, I am at a loss to conceive. He was sharply admonished at the time in some of the journals.

Sir Joshua had now reached his sixty-sixth year; the boldness and happy freedom of his productions were undiminished; and the celerity of his execution, and the glowing richness of his colouring, were rather on the increase than the wane. His life had been uniformly virtuous and temperate; and his looks, notwithstanding the paralytic stroke he had lately received, promised health and long life. He was happy in his fame and fortune, and in the society of numerous and eminent friends; and he saw himself in his old age without a rival. His great prudence and fortunate control of temper had prevented him from giving serious offence to any individual; and the money he had amassed, and the style in which he lived, unencumbered with a family, created a respect for him amongst those who were incapable of understanding his merits. But the hour of sorrow was at hand. One day, in the month of July, 1789, while finishing the portrait of the Marchioness of Hertford, he felt a sudden decay of sight in his left eye. He laid down the pencil; sat a little while in mute consideration, and never lifted it more. His sight gradually darkened, and within ten weeks of the first attack his left eye was wholly blind. He appeared cheerful, and endeavoured to persuade himself that he was resigned and happy. But he had been accustomed to the society of the titled and the beautiful—and from this he was now cut off; he knew the world well, and perceived that, as the pencil, which brought the children of vanity about him as with a charm, could no longer be used, the giddy tide of approbation would soon roll another way. His mental sufferings were visible to some of his friends, though he sought to conceal them with all his might. One read to him to charm away the time—another conversed with him—and the social circle, among whom he

had so long presided, still assembled round the well-spread table. Ozias Humphreys came every morning and read a newspaper to him; his niece, afterwards Marchioness of Thomond, arrived from the country, and endeavoured to soothe and amuse him; and he tried to divert himself by changing the position of his pictures, and by exhibiting them all in succession in his drawing-room, so that he at once pleased his friends and gratified himself.

But a man cannot always live in society, nor can society always spare time to amuse him; there are many hours of existence which he must gladden, as he can, for himself. Cowper took to the taming of hares; and Sir Joshua made a companion of a little bird, which was so tame and docile as to perch on his hand, and with this innocent favourite he was often found by his friends pacing around his room, and speaking to it as if it were a thing of sense and information. A summer morning and an open window were temptations which it could not resist; it flew away; and Reynolds roamed for hours about the square where he resided in hopes of reclaiming it.

His rest was invaded by other disturbers than blindness: the evil spirit of politics appeared in the Literary Club, and made discord amongst the brethren; and, what was worse, a fierce feud broke out between Sir Joshua and the Royal Academy. Reynolds wished, through the persuasion of the Earl of Aylesford, to obtain the chair of perspective for Bonomi, an Italian architect; but, as he did not belong to the Academy, it was necessary that he should be elected an associate, and then a member, before he could be proposed as professor. At the election for *associate* the numbers were equal for Bonomi and Gilpin; the President gave his casting vote for the former, and thus put him one step in the way towards the professor's chair. A member soon after died, and the architect was put in nomination along with Fuseli. Reynolds exerted all his influence to secure the election of the first as Royal Academician; he met with unexpected opposition. His zeal in behalf of Bonomi had been too apparent; he had pushed him by his influence faster forwards than some thought his talents entitled him to, and had transgressed a formal rule by

producing some drawings made by the Italian. Fuseli was elected by a majority of two to one, and Sir Joshua quitted the chair deeply offended. Nor was this all; he wrote a warm, indignant letter, resigning his station as President, and bidding a final farewell to the Academy; he thought a little—and burnt it—and then wrote a cold and courteous one to the same effect. The Academy were overwhelmed with consternation, and endeavoured to soothe his pride by submissions little short of prostration. Sir William Chambers was the bearer, too, of a royal wish, saying how happy his Majesty would be if Sir Joshua would continue President. Thus assailed, he relented, and resumed the seat which his good sense should have prevented him from vacating.

He resumed it, however, only to resign it, which he performed in kindness, not in anger, after an occupation of twenty-one years. During all that period he had continued absolute in the realms of art, and maintained the dignity of his profession both in the Academy and in society. He had encountered, indeed, the rough hostility of Barry, and the opposition of Gainsborough, but these were transient and ineffectual; and save these, and some uncivil bickerings respecting twopenny-halfpenny plans of economy, his reign had been one of prosperity and peace. The other thirty-nine members, indeed, seem to have regarded him with a degree of submission amounting to servile fear; and, generally speaking, in the little senate of the Academy he had all his time sat sole dictator.

The last time that Reynolds made his appearance in the Academy was in the year 1790: he addressed a speech to the students on the delivery of the medals, and concluded by expatiating upon the genius of his favourite master, in such words as a credulous Catholic may use in praise of a benevolent saint. "I feel," said he, "a self-congratulation in knowing myself capable of such sensations as he intended to excite. I reflect, not without vanity, that these discourses bear testimony of my admiration of that truly divine man; and I should desire that the last words which I should pronounce in this Academy, and from this place, might be the name of Michael Angelo."

His last visit to the Academy seemed once on the point of ending tragically. There were present, besides members and students, a number of persons of rank and importance. The multitude was large, the weight great, and, just as the President was commencing his discourse, a beam in the floor gave way with a loud crash. The audience rushed to the door, or to the sides of the room; lord tumbled over student, student over lord, and academicians over both. Sir Joshua sat silent and unmoved in his chair; and, as the floor only sank a little, it was soon supported—the company resumed their seats—and he recommenced his discourse, all with perfect composure. He afterwards remarked, that, if the floor had fallen, the whole company must have been killed, and the arts in Britain thrown two hundred years back in consequence. He considered art as an inheritance descending from father to son; he believed that each succeeding generation would grow wiser and better, and that future academicians had only to add the knowledge of the dead to the genius of the living, and rise higher and higher; painting history till it became divine, and portraits worthy of the gods. That this wild notion was fixed within him there can be no dispute. "So much will painting improve," said he, "that the best we can now achieve, will appear like the work of children."

That examples of excellence in art might not be wanting, Sir Joshua offered to the Royal Academy his valuable collection of pictures by the great masters at a very low price, on the condition that they should purchase a good gallery for their reception. It was his fortune to meet with many mortifications towards the close of his career, and this was one: the Academy, with a parsimony which is left unexplained, declined the purchase. They could not want money—for the President knew their circumstances when he made his proposal. Amongst forty men some two or three sordid souls are sure to be mixed, whose chief delight is the accumulation of money; who damp a generous enthusiasm by their parsimonious calculations, and delight in tying up the public gains of an institution at a satisfactory per-centage. Disappointed in this, Sir Joshua made an exhibition of them in the Haymarket, for

the advantage of his faithful servant, Ralph Kirkley; but our painter's well-known love of gain excited public suspicion; he was considered by many as a partaker in the profits, and reproached by the application of two lines from "Hudibras"—

> "A squire he had whose name was Ralph,
> Who in the adventure went his half."

But he was soon to be removed from the ingratitude of friends, and the malevolence of enemies. He had been on a visit to Mr. Burke in Buckinghamshire. On his return, he alighted at the inn at Hayes, and walked five miles on the road, in company with Mr. Malone, without stopping, and without complaint. He had then, though sixty-eight years old, the looks of a man of fifty, and seemed, said Malone, as likely to live ten or fifteen years as any of his younger friends. Soon after his return home his spirits became much depressed; a tumour, which baffled the skill of the surgeons, began to gather over his left eye, and, feeling the oppression of infirmities, he at length resigned for ever the situation of President of the Royal Academy.

A concealed and fatal malady was invading the functions of life, and sapping his spirits. This was an enlargement of the liver, which expanded to twice its natural dimensions, defied human skill, and deprived him of all cheerfulness. His friends were ever with him, and sought to soothe him with hopes of recovery, and with visions of long life; but he felt, in the simple language of the old bard,

> "That death was with him dealing,"

refused to be comforted, and prepared for dissolution. "I have been fortunate," he said, "in long good health and constant success, and I ought not to complain. I know that all things on earth must have an end, and now I am come to mine." Sir Joshua expired, without any visible symptoms of pain, on the 23rd of February, 1792, in the sixty-ninth year of his age.

"His illness (says Burke) was long, but borne with a mild and cheerful fortitude, without the least mixture of

anything irritable or querulous: agreeably to the placid and even tenour of his whole life. He had, from the beginning of his malady, a distinct view of his dissolution; and he contemplated it with that entire composure, which nothing but the innocence, integrity, and usefulness of his life, and an unaffected submission to the will of Providence, could bestow."

He was interred in one of the crypts of St. Paul's cathedral, and accompanied to the grave by many of the most illustrious men of the land—forty-two coaches conveyed the mourners, and forty-nine empty carriages of the nobility and gentry added their encumbrance to the procession. He lies by the side of Sir Christopher Wren, architect of the edifice; and a statue to his memory by Flaxman has since been placed in the body of the cathedral.

In stature Sir Joshua Reynolds was somewhat below the middle size; his complexion was florid, his features blunt and round, his aspect lively and intelligent, and his manners calm, simple, and unassuming. He was an early mover—a man whom application could not tire, nor constant labour subdue. In his economy he was close and saving; while he poured out his wines, and spread out his tables to the titled or the learned, he stinted his domestics to the commonest fare, and rewarded their faithfulness by very moderate wages. One of his servants, who survived till lately, described him as a master who exacted obedience in trifles—was prudent in the matter of pins—a saver of bits of thread—a man hard and parsimonious, who never thought he had enough of labour out of his dependents, and always suspected that he overpaid them. To this may be added the public opinion, which pictured him close, cold, cautious, and sordid; and, on the other side, we have the open testimony of Burke, Malone, Boswell, and Johnson, who all represent him as generous, open-hearted, and humane. The servants and the friends both spoke, I doubt not, according to their own experience of the man. Privations in early life rendered strict economy necessary; and, in spite of many acts of kindness, his mind on the whole failed to expand with his fortune; he continued the same system of saving when he was master of sixty thousand

pounds, as when he owned but sixpence. He loved reputation dearly, and it would have been well for his fame, if, over and above leaving legacies to such friends as Burke and Malone, he had opened his heart to humbler people.[1] A little would have gone a long way—a kindly word and a guinea prudently given![2][3]

[1] This is inconsistent with the statement that Sir Joshua made an exhibition of his pictures for the benefit of an old servant. The insinuation as to his sharing profits is unworthy of notice. The fact was that wishing to dispose of his collection, and the Royal Academy not having the sense to buy it, he determined to exhibit his paintings by old masters, with a view to their ultimate sale, and caused a catalogue to be prepared of them with marked prices, which was sold by his servant Ralph, who had been in his service for more than thirty years, and to whom he left in his will a legacy of £1,000, thus again refuting the aspersions as to his meanness to his domestics.—Ed.

[2] The Author has been accused of treating Sir Joshua's personal character rather unjustly. He is unconscious of having omitted any inquiry likely to lead him aright; he wrote from the information of one who lived on intimate terms with the President during the last ten years of his life; and he has now again gone over the narrative very carefully, and found it impossible, without violating the truth, to make any alteration of importance as to its facts. Sir Thomas Lawrence had kindly undertaken to peruse this volume, and note any corrections he might think advisable, before it was reprinted. But he did not live to fulfil this promise—and the writer feels abundantly how much he has lost!

[3] By the above note, which was added in the second edition of this work, it will be seen that Allan Cunningham's strange prejudice against Sir Joshua was deliberately entertained. He never misses an opportunity of disparaging a man whom all the world seems to have combined to praise. Perhaps it was from this very reason. He got tired of hearing such universal laudation, and so was led into suspecting motives and attributing meanness. But more probably his estimate was biassed by the person he mentions as having lived on intimate terms with the painter during the last ten years of his life, but whose testimony can hardly be accepted against the united voice of his other friends, who one and all represent him as of a singularly loveable and gentle nature, generous disposition, and kind heart. Numerous stories are told of his wonderful equanimity. "You might have stuck the devil on his back," says Northcote, "without being able to put him in a fidget." His deafness perhaps had something to do with this unusual serenity, for when the conversation became irritating he was always able to "shift his trumpet," and console himself with snuff. Even Northcote, who was an extremely touchy individual, seems to have been unable to quarrel with his master. Never, indeed, was a painter so universally beloved. Testimonies to his goodness of heart, charity, kindly forbearance, and courtesy are everywhere to be found.—Ed.

Sir Joshua has a threefold claim upon posterity—for his Discourses, his historical and poetical paintings, and his portraits. Of all these I have already spoken at some length. The Discourses were delivered when the annual distribution of medals took place among the most promising students of the Royal Academy. Their object was to impress upon the minds of his audience a sense of the dignity, and a knowledge of the character and importance of art—to stimulate them to study and labour—to point out the way to excellence: unfold the principles of composition, and disclose the charms of beauty and the whole mystery of colour. He required lively diligence, continued study and unlimited belief in the excellence of the chief masters of the calling—in reward for which he promised distinction and fame. But fame could be acquired only by study, hard, and above all well-directed—rules were the ornaments, not the fetters of genius, and hard labour was the way to eminence, and the only way. The great painters, when they conceived a subject, first made a variety of sketches, then a finished drawing of the whole—after that a more correct drawing of every separate part—then they painted the picture, and finally retouched it from the life. The pictures, thus wrought with such pains, appeared to be the effect of enchantment, and as if some mighty genius had struck them off at a blow.—Those Discourses were always heard with respect; and as the subject was new, the compositions full of knowledge, and the illustrations numerous and happy, they obtained the approbation of skilful judges, and rose to such reputation, that they were attributed at one time to Johnson, and at another to Burke.

They are distinguished by many beauties, and deformed by one serious fault—they correspond not with the character of English art, and the determined taste of this country. "Study," exclaimed Reynolds to his students (and I could quote fifty pages to the same purpose), "study the great works of the great masters for ever. Study as nearly as you can in the order, in the manner, on the principles on which they studied. Study nature attentively, but always with those masters in your company: consider them as models which you are to imitate, and at

the same time as rivals which you are to combat." Such was his theory: we all know what was his practice. He could not be unaware, while he was lecturing the annual academical crop of beardless youths upon the necessity of studying in the character, and labouring in the style of the princes of the Italian school, that he was sending them forth to seek bread and fame in a pursuit where neither was to be found; while he was shutting his lips, and keeping silence concerning the domestic style and the mystery of portraiture, in which he himself was unequalled.

It was, I apprehend too, the province of the President to point out those natural qualities by which genius for art might be distinguished from forwardness and presumption, and young men might see whether they were led by the false light of vanity or by light from heaven. Every dunce can labour; but stupidity must toil like Caliban, while genius works its ready wonders like the wand of Prospero. It was not enough that he called the students before him, and set them their stated tasks of smoothing clay or of colouring canvas:—he ought to have admonished, nay, commanded the dull and unintellectual to retire from a pursuit for which they were unfit. All men indeed are capable of being artists in a certain degree, as all men may be versifiers; but a decent drawing is no more a proof of genius in art, than a few smooth and sounding lines are a proof of the spirit of poetry. The youth who is to be encouraged in the pursuit of poetry, should show glimpses of original power of thought and ready happiness of language; and a student in art should display some production of original and unborrowed talent before admission to the Academy. A good eye, a steady hand, and a little practice, may enable any young man to make such a copy of an antique figure as will give him admission, without genius to rise one step higher.

Sir Joshua's historical paintings have little of the heroic dignity which an inspired mind breathes into compositions of that class. His imagination commonly fails him, and he attempts to hide his want of wings in the unrivalled splendour of his colouring, and by the thick-strewn graces

of his execution. He is often defective even where he might have expected to show the highest excellence: his faces are formal and cold; and the picture seems made up of borrowed fragments, which he had been unable to work up into an entire and consistent whole.

His single poetic figures are remarkable for their unaffected ease, their elegant simplicity, and the splendour of their colouring. Some scores of those happy things he dashed off in the course of his life; and though they are chiefly portraits, they have all the charm of the most successful aërial creations. The Shepherd Boy is one of his happiest. Of children he seems to have been remarkably fond; nor can one forbear imagining that he has romped or ridden with them on the parlour broom, sorrowed with them over the loss of their favourite birds, smiled with them on their being endowed with new finery, and enjoyed all the mixed surprise and triumph expressed in the face of Muscipula on catching a mouse in a trap. It is true that they are all children of condition, with their nurses wet and dry—that their clothes are of the finest texture and the latest fashion—and that we are conscious of looking at future lords and ladies. But nature overpowers all minor feelings, and we cannot refrain from doing involuntary homage to the genius of the painter who has gladdened us with the sight of so much innocence and beauty.

To some of his poetic figures I cannot afford such praise, though the grace of their composition and the singular sweetness of their looks raise them far above censure. By what he considered a classical refinement upon his professional flattery of improved looks and glowing colours, he suffered some of the fairest of his sitters to be goddesses and nymphs, and painted them in character. This was the common-place pedantry of painting; it had been the fashion for centuries. Lely and Kneller caused the giddy madams of the courts of the Stuarts to stalk like Minervas or Junos, though they had naturally the dispositions of Venus or of Danaë; and Reynolds, who had equal loveliness and infinitely more purity to portray, indulged his beauties with the same kind of deification. In truth it is only worthy of a smile.

The portraits of Reynolds are equally numerous and excellent, and all who have written of their merits have swelled their eulogiums by comparing them with the simplicity of Titian, the vigour of Rembrandt, and the elegance and delicacy of Vandyke. Certainly, in character and expression, and in manly ease, he has never been surpassed. He is always equal—always natural—graceful—unaffected. His boldness of posture and his singular freedom of colouring are so supported by all the grace of art—by all the sorcery of skill—that they appear natural and noble. Over the meanest head he sheds the halo of dignity; his men are all nobleness, his women all loveliness, and his children all simplicity: yet they are all like the living originals. He had the singular art of summoning the mind into the face, and making sentiment mingle in the portrait. He could completely dismiss all his preconceived notions of academic beauty from his mind, be dead to the past and living only to the present, and enter into the character of the reigning beauty of the hour with a truth and a happiness next to magical. It is not to be denied that he was a mighty flatterer. Had Colonel Charteris sat to Reynolds, he would, I doubt not, have given an aspect worthy of a President of the Society for the Suppression of Vice.

That the admirers of portrait-painting are many, the annual exhibitions show us; and it is pleasant to read the social and domestic affections of the country in these innumerable productions. In the minds of some they rank with historical compositions; and there can be no doubt that portraits which give the form and the soul of poets, and statesmen, and warriors, and of all whose actions or whose thoughts lend lustre to the land, are to be received as illustrations of history. But with the mob of portraits fame and history have nothing to do. The painter who wishes for lasting fame must not lavish his fine colours and his choice postures on the rich and the titled alone; he must seek to associate his labours with the genius of his country. The face of an undistinguished person, however exquisitely painted, is disregarded in the eyes of posterity. The most skilful posture and the richest colouring cannot

create the reputation which accompanies genius, and we turn coldly away from the head which we happen not to know or to have heard of. The portrait of Johnson has risen to the value of five hundred guineas: while the heads of many of Sir Joshua's grandest lords remain at their original fifty.

The influence of Reynolds on the taste and elegance of the island was great, and will be lasting. The grace and ease of his compositions were a lesson for the living to study, while the simplicity of his dresses admonished the giddy and the gay against the hideousness of fashion. He sought to restore nature in the looks of his sitters, and he waged a thirty years' war against the fopperies of dress. His works diffused a love of elegance, and united with poetry in softening the asperities of nature, in extending our views, and in connecting us with the spirits of the time. His cold stateliness of character, and his honourable pride of art, gave dignity to his profession: the rich and the far-descended were pleased to be painted by a gentleman as well as a genius.

Of historical and poetic subjects he painted upwards of one hundred and thirty. They are chiefly in England, and in the galleries or chambers of the titled and the opulent. The names of a few of the most famous may interest the reader:—"Macbeth and the Witches;" "Cardinal Beaufort;" "Holy Family;" "Hercules strangling the Serpents;" "The Nativity;" "Count Ugolino;" "Cymon and Iphigenia;" "The Fortune Teller;" "Garrick between Tragedy and Comedy;" "The Snake in the Grass;" "The Blackguard Mercury;" "Muscipula;" "Puck;" "Mrs. Siddons as the Tragic Muse;" "The Shepherd Boy;" "Venus chiding Cupid for casting accounts."

Of men he painted the portraits of some four-and-twenty whose names still occupy their station in fame or history; and of ladies he painted many remarkable for accomplishments, mental and personal. Among the former are Percy, Bishop of Dromore; Edmund Burke; Colonel Tarleton; Dr. Charles Burney; Dr. Hawkesworth; Dr. Robertson; Joseph Warton; the Earl of Mansfield; Ed-

ward Gibbon; Oliver Goldsmith; Samuel Johnson; Warren Hastings; Lord Anson; Lord Heathfield; Lord Ligonier; Lord Rodney; Lord Thurlow; Lord Granby; Thomas Warton; Adam Fergusson; Sir Joseph Banks; Sir William Chambers; Laurence Sterne; Dr. Beattie; Viscount Keppel; Horace Walpole; and Sir Joshua Reynolds.

Let me conclude with the words of Burke; they are a little loftier than necessary, and somewhat warmer. The eulogy from which they are taken, appeared in the newspapers the day after Sir Joshua's death, and produced a very great sensation; but much less cannot be said when a colder tale comes to be told.

"Sir Joshua Reynolds was, on many accounts, one of the most memorable men of his time. He was the first Englishman who added the praise of the elegant arts to the other glories of his country. In taste—in grace—in facility—in happy invention—and in the richness and harmony of colouring, he was equal to the greatest masters of the renowned ages. In portrait he went beyond them; for he communicated to that description of the art, in which English artists are most engaged, a variety, a fancy, and a dignity, derived from the higher branches, which even those who professed them in a superior manner did not always preserve when they delineated individual nature. His portraits remind the spectator of the invention and the amenity of landscape. In painting portraits he appeared not to be raised upon that platform, but to descend upon it from a higher sphere.

"In full affluence of foreign and domestic fame, admired by the expert in art and by the learned in science, courted by the great, caressed by sovereign powers, and celebrated by distinguished poets, his native humility, modesty, and candour never forsook him even on surprise or provocation: nor was the least degree of arrogance or assumption visible to the most scrutinizing eye in any part of his conduct or discourse.

"His talents of every kind, powerful by nature and not meanly cultivated by letters—his social virtues in all the relations and all the habitudes of life, rendered him the centre of a very great and unparalleled variety of agree-

able societies which will be dissipated by his death. He had too much merit not to excite some jealousy—too much innocence to provoke any enmity. The loss of no man of his time can be felt with more sincere, general, and unmixed sorrow. Hail! and Farewell."

THOMAS GAINSBOROUGH.

TWO eminent men, Wilson and Gainsborough, laid the foundation of our school of landscape; their works are full of the truest nature and the purest fancy, and their fame is now properly felt; yet of their personal history little is known save what the suspicious testimony of avowed enemies and careless friends—and the random notice of some periodical writers—may add to the vague stream of tradition.[1]

Thomas Gainsborough, the fourth eminent name in British art, was born in the year 1727, at Sudbury, in Suffolk—the day or the month no one has mentioned. Of his father, whose name was John, by trade a clothier, and in religion a dissenter, I can only say with common belief that he was a stately and personable man, with something mysterious in his history, for the pastoral and timid rustics of Suffolk suspected him of carrying a dagger and pistols under his clothes. Of his mother, whose maiden name I have not learned, the same authority says that she was kind and indulgent to her children; and, moreover, somewhat proud of her sons, of whom she had three, all distinguished above their companions for talents and attainments. The family was of old standing, well to live, and of unblemished respectability.

Respecting Thomas, the youngest son, memory is still strong in Suffolk. Near Sudbury a beautiful wood of four

[1] Since Cunningham's time Gainsborough's life has been written by G. W. Fulcher, but even his work, published in 1856, is scanty in its information and does not give much personal detail beyond what Cunningham had collected. Messrs. Redgrave have, also, devoted a chapter to Gainsborough in their "Century of Painters," and more recently Mr. Fred. Wedmore has given a critical estimate of his art in his "Studies in English Art."—ED.

miles' extent is shown, whose ancient trees, winding glades, and sunny nooks inspired him, while he was but a schoolboy, with the love of art. Scenes are pointed out where he used to sit and fill his copy-books with pencillings of flowers, and trees, and whatever pleased his fancy; and it is said that those early attempts of the child bore a distinct resemblance to the mature works of the man. At ten years old he had made some progress in sketching, and at twelve he was a confirmed painter. Good scholarship was under such circumstances out of the question; yet his letters which I have seen, show no want in the art of expressing clear thoughts in clear words. His knowledge was obtained from his intercourse with mankind, and by his spirit of ready observation he supplied the deficiencies of education.

The sketches which he made were concealed for a time —the secret, however, could no longer be kept. One day he had ventured to request a holiday, which was refused, and the audacious boy imposed his own penmanship on the master for the usual written request of his father, of "Give Tom a holiday." The trick was found out; his father looked upon the simulated paper with fear, and muttered, "The boy will come to be hanged!" but when he was informed that those stolen hours were bestowed upon the pencil, and some of Tom's sketches were shown to him, his brow cleared up, and he exclaimed, "The boy will be a genius!" Other stories of his early works are not wanting. On one occasion he was concealed among some bushes in his father's garden, making a sketch of an old fantastic tree, when he observed a man looking most wistfully over the wall at some pears, which were hanging ripe and tempting. The slanting light of the sun happened to throw the eager face into a highly picturesque mixture of light and shade, and Tom immediately sketched his likeness, much to the poor man's consternation afterwards, and much to the amusement of his father, when he taxed the peasant with the intention of plundering his garden, and showed him how he looked. Gainsborough long afterwards made a finished painting of this Sudbury rustic—a work much admired amongst artists—under the name of

Tom Peartree's portrait. He loved to show his powers in such hasty things; and, from the unembarrassed freedom of mind and hand with which he produced them, they take rank with his happiest compositions.

Of his early sketches made in the woods of Sudbury, few, I apprehend, now exist, though they were once numerous. No fine clump of trees, no picturesque stream, nor romantic glade—no cattle grazing, nor flocks reposing, nor peasants pursuing their rural or pastoral occupations—escaped his diligent pencil. Those hasty sketches were all treasured up as materials to be used when his hand should have become skilful; he showed them to his visitors, and called them his riding-school. As his reputation rose he became less satisfied with these early proofs of talent, and scattered them with a profuse hand amongst friends and visitors. To one lady he made a present of twenty; but so injudiciously were these precious things bestowed, that the lady pasted them round the walls of her apartment, and, as she soon left London, they became the property of the next inhabitant. His *first* drawing was a clump of trees—he long retained it, and one of his biographers says it was a "wonderful thing."

Talents so vigorous were acknowledged even in the seclusion of a country-place; and his father was very willingly persuaded to send the youth—to prosecute his labours with the benefit of example and instruction—to London. No one has made him older than fourteen when he left Sudbury for the metropolis,[1] and all agree that he studied under Hayman, one of the companions of Hogarth. Grignon the engraver, who knew him well, informed Edwards, author of the "Anecdotes of Painters," that Gainsborough received the *first* rudiments of his art from Gravelot.[2] His genius, his history, his modest deportment, and

[1] Fulcher says that he was fifteen when he came to London, and that he lodged at first in the house of a silversmith who introduced him to Gravelot.—Ed.

[2] Gravelot was a French engraver of great ability who came over to England in 1733, where he soon got employment from artists in engraving plates. He is said to have assisted Hogarth with some of his early ones, and he executed the engravings in Theobald's "Shakespeare" from his

his good looks, obtained him many friends; but he had not then formed any high notion of his own powers: he, at the most, considered himself as one whose skill might gain him a comfortable livelihood in a provincial town. He saw that historical painting was an unprofitable, and he felt it to be an uncongenial pursuit; no landscapes worthy of art had yet made their appearance, for Wilson was seeking bread in portraiture; he could not fail to see that his own works were essentially different from those which filled the easels of the artists in St. Martin's Lane —and mistrusted his success accordingly. He remained in London four years; and having acquired skill, and mastered some of the mystic tricks of colour and composition, he returned to his father's house a confirmed painter.

He was now in his eighteenth year, and the reputation of his talents, the modest gaiety of his conversation, and the extreme elegance of his person, rendered his company universally acceptable in his native place. He could not, indeed, learn modesty under Hayman; but he acquired the art of making use of his wit and his information with a graceful readiness, and his handsome form, and looks beaming with intelligence and genius, could not fail of doing him a good turn if he conducted himself wisely. It happened, in one of his pictorial excursions amongst the woods of Suffolk, that he sat down to make a sketch of some fine trees, with sheep reposing below, and wood-doves roosting above, when a young woman entered unexpectedly upon the scene, and was at once admitted into the landscape and

own designs. A catalogue of his works is now being prepared by a French writer. At the time of Gainsborough's visit he had a drawing school of great repute in the Strand, and from him Gainsborough no doubt received much valuable instruction, instruction which we may well imagine had more influence over his style than that which he afterwards received under Hayman at the St. Martin's Lane Academy. This noted academy, though much frequented by the artists of the time, was eminently a place of "threadbare rules and traditional commonplaces," where Gainsborough certainly would never have learnt to paint nature in her homely garb. I have, however, seen some of his early sketches in which the landscape was "composed" according to the most accepted rules. These might very well have been executed at the St. Martin's Lane Academy. —Ed.

the feelings of the artist. The name of this young lady was Margaret Burr; she was of Scottish extraction, and in her sixteenth year, and to the charms of good sense and good looks, was added a clear annuity of two hundred pounds. These are matters which no writer of romance would overlook; and were accordingly felt by a young, an ardent, and susceptible man; nor must I omit to tell that country rumour conferred other attractions—she was said to be the natural daughter of one of our exiled princes; nor was she, when a wife and a mother, desirous of having this circumstance forgotten. On an occasion of household festivity, when her husband was high in fame, she vindicated some little ostentation in her dress by whispering to her niece, "I have some right to this—for you know, my love, I am a prince's daughter."[1] Prince's daughter or not, she was wooed and won by Gainsborough, and made him a kind, a prudent, and a submissive wife. The courtship was short. The young pair left Sudbury, leased a small house at a rent of six pounds a year in Ipswich, and, making themselves happy in mutual love, conceived they were settled for life.

In Ipswich it was his destiny to become acquainted with Philip Thicknesse, governor of Landguard Fort—a gentleman who befriended him at first and maligned him afterwards. This person instantly threw the mantle of his patronage over him. It is not unusual to see a friend of this fashion marching triumphantly before genius as it is struggling into distinction, and imagining all the while that from his notice the other's reputation arises. Gainsborough was as yet little known, and had few friends; his excellency lived in a lonely place, and was desirous of having his solitude enlivened by a visitor whose wit was abundant and his pencil ready. While the artist continued humble the patron was kind: but as he began to assert his own independence, the esteem of the other subsided, and the vain friend became the avowed

[1] This romantic extraction to say the least is very doubtful. We are told by later authorities that the young lady was the daughter of his father's partner.—Ed.

enemy. Had this been all, it might have been regretted less; but, so soon as the artist died, Thicknesse, under pretence of writing a sketch of his life, produced an unworthy pamphlet, which misrepresented him as a man while it praised him as a painter.[1] It is indeed unsafe to follow it for a single page; but as honey is found in the basest weed, so may truth be extracted from this malignant narrative.[2] I shall only adopt such anecdotes as are corroborated by internal evidence, and have been confirmed or corrected by the living representatives of the house of Gainsborough.

The first meeting of the artist and the governor was in character. The latter, whilst taking a walk in a friend's garden, saw a melancholy face looking over the wall. As the stranger remained long in the same position, he advanced to accost him, when he perceived it to be a piece of wood shaped and painted like a man, and stationed as a sentinel in the adjoining garden of Gainsborough. This species of joke corresponded with the taste of the governor—he waited on the artist, and upbraided him with having imposed a shadow upon him for a substance. The compliment was not ill received, and he was shown into the painting-room, where he found many portraits which he thought but indifferently executed, and more landscapes, which he at once pronounced to be works of spirit and fancy. Amongst the former was the head of Admiral Vernon, and the portrait of the identical Tom Peartree, who longed for the ripe pears in Sudbury garden.

Of his productions in those early days Thicknesse is the only man who speaks, and I must use his words. "Madam Nature, not man, was then his only study, and he seemed intimately acquainted with that beautiful lady." So far well. —"I was the first man," continues the governor, "who perceived, through clouds of bad colouring, what an accurate eye he possessed, and the truth of his drawings, and who

[1] For the use of this now rare tract I am indebted to the kindness of the Rev. Edward Poole.

[2] It was published in 1788 under the title "A Sketch of the Life and Paintings of Thomas Gainsborough." There is a copy in the South Kensington Library.—Ed.

dragged him from the obscurity of a country-town at a time when all his neighbours were as ignorant of his great talents as he was himself." This is the modesty of patronage! Gainsborough had shown a strong consciousness of talents, for he depended upon them for bread before he was eighteen years old; and some of his neighbours had appreciated his genius, since they had counselled his removal to the academies of London.

The governor gave him a commission to paint Landguard Fort, including the neighbouring hills and the port of Harwich, price thirty guineas, and, to sum up all, he lent him a fiddle; on which he erelong made such proficiency, that the governor, though a skilful musician himself, declares he would as soon have tried to paint against him as fiddle against him. An engraving by Major of the picture of Landguard Fort spread abroad the name of Gainsborough; the vanity of Thicknesse, and the desire which the artist had of distinction were gratified, and they appear to have lived in great amity through the united influence of painting and fiddling. Of the original painting of the Fort nothing now remains; it was hung on a wall built with mortar mixed with sea-water, and so perished.

The increasing fame of Gainsborough demanded a wider field; he had exhausted the faces and the scenery of Ipswich, and the counsel of Thicknesse agreeing with his own wishes, removed to Bath in the year 1758, and took lodgings in the Circus, at the rate of fifty pounds annually. He was now in the thirty-first year of his age, and his fame was in some degree established—yet so small, in spite of the boasted patronage of the governor, had his success been, that his wife, come of a prudent nation, if not of a prudent family, was alarmed, remonstrated against this increase of expenditure, and was with some difficulty appeased.

It formed part of the plan of the governor, who conceived himself to be very popular in Bath, that his portrait, painted on purpose, "should serve as a decoy duck for customers." The artist himself, however, seems to have given less enthusiasm to this project than his friend. He

had begun to grow weary of offering up continual incense to this vain deity; and to wish to be relieved from this overwhelming patronage of one who claimed the fame arising from his works, and the privilege of directing his studies. From some hints which his excellency throws out, I apprehend that he attributed this independent movement to the influence of Mrs. Gainsborough. But the artist must, I believe, have the whole honour of this to himself. Thicknesse seems never to have suspected that, though Gainsborough was a pleasant companion, and one who indulged in sallies of merriment and humour, he concealed, under all this, a variable temper, and a spirit shy, proud, intrepid, and intractable. His wife, whatever the governor has insinuated to the contrary, was a remarkably mild and sweet-tempered woman—I repeat the words of Mrs. Lane—who gave her husband his own way, and never sought to win him to her wishes but by gentleness. Indeed he was one of the last that would have brooked control; and so proud, or so whimsical, that he never rode up to his own door in a hackney coach, and admonished his niece to avoid doing so if she loved him. Those who knew both Thicknesse and Gainsborough, were only surprised that they continued friends so long. The tide was now on the turn; the portrait, proposed by the governor as a profitable decoy, was left untouched; the heads of men of inferior mark were limned off by the dozen, and landscapes, which contained other beauties than those of Landguard Fort, were painted; the patron lost patience and remonstrated; the pride of the painter was hurt, and he forthwith resolved to free himself from the encumbrance of a sort of patronizing nightmare, who, under pretence of caressing, seemed disposed to suffocate him. The dissolution of their friendship, however, was the work of years.

In the meanwhile, Gainsborough gave all his time to portrait, to landscape, and to music. Portrait painting, like the poet with the two mistresses, had his visits, but landscape and music had his heart. His price for a head rose from five guineas to eight, and as his fame increased, the charge augmented till he had forty guineas for a half,

and a hundred for a whole, length. Riches now flowed in, for his hand was ready and diligent; his wife was relieved from her fears in the matter of money; and he was enabled to indulge himself after his own fashion. Books he admired little: in one of his letters he says that he was well read in the volume of nature, and that was learning sufficient for him; the intercourse of literary men he avoided as carefully as Reynolds courted it: but he was fond of company, and passionately so of music. He considered a good musician as one of the first of men, and a good instrument as one of the noblest works of human skill. All the hours of intermission in his profession, he gave to fiddles and rebecs. To this period the following characteristic story has been ascribed, and though strange, it seems true.

"Gainsborough's profession," says his friend Jackson, "was painting, and music was his amusement; yet there were times when music seemed to be his employment and painting his diversion. As his skill in music has been celebrated, I shall mention what degree of merit he possessed as a musician. He happened on a time to see a theorbo in a picture of Vandyke's, and concluded, because perhaps it was finely painted, that the theorbo must be a fine instrument. He recollected to have heard of a German professor, and ascending to his garret found him dining on roasted apples, and smoking his pipe with his theorbo beside him. 'I am come to buy your lute—name your price, and here's your money.' 'I cannot sell my lute.' 'No, not for a guinea or two—but you must sell it, I tell you.' 'My lute is worth much money—it is worth ten guineas.' 'Ay! that it is—see, here's the money.' So saying, he took up the instrument, laid down the price, went half-way down the stair, and returned. 'I have done but half my errand; what is your lute worth if I have not your book?' 'What book, Master Gainsborough?' 'Why, the book of airs you have composed for the lute.' 'Ah, sir, I can never part with my book!' 'Poh! you can make another at any time—this is the book I mean—there's ten guineas for it—so once more good day.' He went down a few steps, and returned again. 'What use

is your book to me if I don't understand it? and your lute, you may take it again if you won't teach me to play on it. Come home with me, and give me the first lesson.' 'I will come to-morrow.' 'You must come now.' 'I must dress myself.' 'For what? You are the best figure I have seen to-day.' 'I must shave, sir.' 'I honour your beard!' 'I must, however, put on my wig.' 'Damn your wig! your cap and beard become you! Do you think if Vandyke was to paint you, he'd let you be shaved?' In this manner he frittered away his musical talents, and though possessed of ear, taste, and genius, he never had application enough to learn his notes. He seemed to take the first step, the second was of course out of his reach, and the summit became unattainable."

He was so passionately attached to music that he filled his house with all manner of instruments, and allowed his table to be infested with all sorts of professors, save bagpipers. He loved Giardini and his violin—he admired Abel and his viol-di-gamba—he patronized Fischer and his hautboy—and was in raptures with a strolling harper, who descended from the Welsh mountains into Bath. When he dined, he talked of music; when he painted, he discoursed with his visitors and sitters on its merits, and when he had leisure he practised by fits and starts on his numerous instruments, and notwithstanding Jackson's opinion, his performance was worthy of praise.

One of his acquaintances in Bath was Wiltshere, the public carrier, a kind and worthy man, who loved Gainsborough, and admired his works. In one of his landscapes, he wished to introduce a horse, and as the carrier had a very handsome one, he requested the loan of it for a day or two, and named his purpose; his generous neighbour bridled it and saddled it, and sent it as a present. The painter was not a man to be outdone in acts of generosity; he painted the waggon and horses of his friend, put his whole family and himself into it, and sent it well-framed to Wiltshere, with his kind respects. It is considered a very capital performance. From 1761, when Gainsborough began to exhibit his paintings at the Academy, till his removal from Bath in 1774, Wiltshere was annually

employed to carry his pictures to and from London; he took great care of them, and constantly refused to accept money, saying, "No—no—I admire painting too much," and plunged his hands in his pockets to secure them against the temptation of the offered payment. Perceiving, however, that this was not acceptable to the proud artist, the honest carrier hit upon a scheme which pleased both. "When you think" (said he) "that I have *carried* to the value of a little painting, I beg you will let me have one, sir; and I shall be more than paid." In this coin the painter paid Wiltshere; and overpaid him. His son is still in possession of several of these pictures, and appreciates their value; many of Gainsborough's productions were not so worthily disposed of.

Of his works during his residence at Bath, I am not enabled to give any particular account. They were no doubt numerous, since he could live in the style of a gentleman, and entertain company. His brothers were made sensible of his change of fortune, and it must be related to his honour that all his kindred and connections speak of him as a kind and generous man, who anticipated wants, and bore his fortunes meekly. Nor was the governor of Landguard Fort himself without a small share in these showers of good fortune. The artist appears to have discovered that money would not be unwelcome in the household of his friend, and to have taken a singular and delicate mode of lending his assistance. I must first, however, relate this story as Thicknesse himself has told it.

Among the instruments of music which Gainsborough loved, I have named the viol-di-gamba, and Mrs. Thicknesse had one, made in the year 1612, on which she played with much skill and effect. He appeared one evening to be exceedingly charmed with the instrument, and said, "I love it so much that I will willingly give a hundred guineas for it." She desired him to stay to supper; she placed the viol-di-gamba beside him, he took it up and played in a manner so masterly, that Mrs. Thicknesse said, "You deserve an instrument on which you play so well; and I beg your acceptance of it, on the condition that you will give me my husband's picture to hang beside the one which you painted

of me." The artist acquiesced; the viol-di-gamba was sent to him next morning; he stretched a canvas, took one sitting of some fifteen minutes' duration, and then laid it aside for other works. The lady was incensed, and the husband remonstrated; Gainsborough returned the viol-di-gamba and never touched the picture more.

Such is the story of Thicknesse: the family version, communicated to me by a lady who had it from Mrs. Gainsborough herself, is somewhat different. The painter (according to this account) put a hundred guineas privately into the hands of Mrs. Thicknesse for the viol-di-gamba; her husband, who might not be aware of what passed, renewed his wish for his portrait; and obtained what he conceived to be a promise that it should be painted. This double benefaction was, however, more than Gainsborough had contemplated: he commenced the portrait, but there it stopped; and after a time, resenting some injurious expressions from the lips of the governor, the artist sent him the picture, rough and unfinished as it was, and returned also the viol-di-gamba.

"This," said Thicknesse, "was a deadly blow to me; but I knew, though it seemed his act, it did not originate with him: he had been told, that I said openly in the public coffee-house at Bath, that when I first knew him at Ipswich, his children were running about the streets there without shoes or stockings; but the rascal who told him so was the villain who robbed the poor from the plate he held at the church door for alms." Such words as these were likely to sink deep into the proud heart of Gainsborough; and though Thicknesse denied them—as well he might, for they were untrue—they aided him in the resolution which he probably had long formed of making his escape from such crushing patronage and ungentle company. Even this necessary step was precipitated by Thicknesse himself. He sent back his portrait with a note, requesting him to take his brush and first rub out the countenance of the truest and warmest friend he ever had; and having so done, then blot him for ever from his memory.

Gainsborough now removed to London, took a house in

Pall-Mall, which was built by Duke Schomberg, and removing all his paintings and drawings, and flutes and fiddles, bade farewell to Bath for ever.[1]

Even to London the harassing protection of Thicknesse pursued him. "I was much alarmed," said that most prudent of patrons, "lest, with all his merit and genius, he might be in London a long time before he was properly known to that class of people who alone could *essentially* serve him; for of all the men I ever knew, he possessed least of that worldly knowledge to enable him to make his own way into the notice of the *great world.* I therefore wrote to Lord Bateman, who knew him, and who admired his talents, stating the above particulars, and urging him at the same time, for both our sakes, to give him countenance and make him known. His lordship, for me or for both our sakes, did so; and his remove from Bath to London proved as good a move as it was from Ipswich to Bath." The matchless vanity of this man made him believe not only that he was the sole cause of our painter's success in Bath, but that from his intercession with Lord Bateman sprung all the subsequent good fortune in London of the man who had already painted many noble productions, and who had exhibited them for thirteen years in succession in the Royal Academy.

He was now freed from this incumbrance, and continued his career in portraiture and landscape with fresh feeling and increasing success. His house was ample, his gallery was fit for the reception of the first in rank, and as the fame of the heads of Lord Kilmorrey, Mr. Quin, Mr. Medlicote, Mr. Mosey, Dr. Charlton, Mr. Fischer, and Mrs. Thicknesse had gone before him, he soon found good employment. Sir Joshua Reynolds was then high in favour; but even the rapid execution of the President could not satisfy the whole demand; and there was room for another, who, to just delineation of character, added a force and a freedom which approached and sometimes rivalled Van-

[1] This was in 1774. He had before this sent pictures to the Royal Academy, of which he was one of the original members, but as that Institution was only founded in 1769, he could not have contributed to its exhibitions for thirteen years, as Cunningham says.—Ed.

dyke. A conversation or family piece of the king, the queen, and the three royal sisters, was much admired;[1] indeed, the permanent splendour of his colours, and the natural and living air which he communicated to whatever he touched, made him already, in the estimation of many, a rival, and a dangerous one, of the President himself.

Amongst those who sat to him was the Duchess of Devonshire—then in the bloom of youth, at once the loveliest of the lovely, and the gayest of the gay. But her dazzling beauty, and the sense which he entertained of the charms of her looks, and her conversation, took away that readiness of hand and hasty happiness of touch which belonged to him in his ordinary moments. The portrait was so little to his satisfaction, that he refused to send it to Chatsworth. Drawing his wet pencil across a mouth which all who saw it thought exquisitely lovely, he said, "Her Grace is too hard for me." The picture was, I believe, destroyed. Amongst his papers were found two sketches of the duchess—both exquisitely graceful.

He had customers who annoyed him with other difficulties than those of too radiant loveliness. A certain lord, whom one of our biographers, out of compassion for rank, calls an *alderman*, came for his portrait; and that all might be worthy of his station, he had put on a new suit of clothes, richly-laced, with a well-powdered wig. Down he sat, and put on a practised look of such importance and

[1] A portrait group of the three royal princesses was sent by Gainsborough to the Royal Academy in 1784, with the request that it might be hung on the line, although it was above the regulation size, in order that the likenesses might be properly seen, which could not be if it were hung higher than eight feet. His request, however, was not granted, and he was so offended in consequence that he took the picture away, and never afterwards exhibited at the Royal Academy. I do not know whether this is the work to which Cunningham alludes, as the king and queen do not appear in it. This picture met with a disastrous fate, for it was so large that on some occasion it was cut down by an officer of the palace in order to form a *supra-porte* in one of the rooms of the palace, and by this means the portraits were reduced to dwarfed half-lengths. What remains is said by Redgrave, who gives these particulars, to be still very beautiful. A sketch for this picture, then in the possession of Mr. Wynn Ellis, was exhibited at Burlington House in 1871.—Ed.

prettiness, that the artist, who was no flatterer either with tongue or pencil, began to laugh, and was heard to mutter. "This will never do!" The patient having composed himself in conformity with his station, said, "Now, sir, I beg you will not overlook the dimple on my chin!" "Confound the dimple on your chin!" said Gainsborough—"I shall neither paint the one nor the other." And he laid down his brushes, and refused to resume them. Garrick, too, and Foote also came for their likenesses; he tried again and again, without success, and dismissed them in despair. "Rot them for a couple of rogues," he exclaimed, "they have everybody's faces but their own!"[1] As the reader has already seen, David Garrick had the address to gratify Reynolds with a ludicrous account of this failure.

With others he was more fortunate. But, excellent as many of his portraits are, it was a desire to excel in many things which drew him from his favourite study of free and unsophisticated nature. There he surpassed all living men; in portrait, he was more than equalled by Reynolds. "Nature," says Thicknesse, in one of those moments when love of his early friend prevailed against hatred—"Nature sat to him in all her attractive attitudes of beauty; and his pencil traced, with peculiar and matchless facility, her finest and most delicate lineaments; whether it was the sturdy oak, the twisted eglantine, the mower whetting his scythe, the whistling ploughboy, or the shepherd under the hawthorn in the dale—all came forth equally chaste from his inimitable and fanciful pencil."

Though Gainsborough was not partial to the society of literary men, he seems to have been acquainted with Johnson and with Burke; and he lived on terms of great affection with Richard Brinsley Sheridan. He was also a welcome visitor at the table of Sir George Beaumont, a gentleman of graceful manners, who lived in old English dignity, and was, besides, a lover of literature and a painter of landscape. The latter loved to relate a curious anecdote of Gainsborough, which marks the unequal spirits of the

[1] With Quin the actor he was probably more successful, for Dr. Doran says that Quin left a legacy of £50 to "Mr. Thomas Gainsborough, *limner*."—ED.

man, and shows that he was the slave of wayward impulses which he could neither repress nor command. Sir George Beaumont, Sheridan, and Gainsborough had dined together, and the latter was more than usually pleasant and witty. The meeting was so much to their mutual satisfaction, that they agreed to have another day's happiness, and accordingly an early day was named when they should dine again together. They met, but a cloud had descended upon the spirit of Gainsborough, and he sat silent, with a look of fixed melancholy, which no wit could dissipate. At length he took Sheridan by the hand, led him out of the room, and said, "Now don't laugh, but listen. I shall die soon—I know it—I feel it—I have less time to live than my looks infer—but for this I care not. What oppresses my mind is this—I have many acquaintances and few friends; and as I wish to have one worthy man to accompany me to the grave, I am desirous of bespeaking you—will you come—aye or no?" Sheridan could scarcely repress a smile, as he made the required promise; the looks of Gainsborough cleared up like the sunshine of one of his own landscapes; throughout the rest of the evening his wit flowed, and his humour ran over, and the minutes like those of the poet winged their way with pleasure.

Between Gainsborough and Reynolds there seems to have been little good-will—surely the feuds of artists are more numerous than those of any other community of Christians. They at one time appeared desirous of making something like an exchange of portraits; and Gainsborough obtained one sitting of the President—but the piece, like that of Thicknesse, was never completed. The cold and carefully meted out courtesy of the one, little suited with the curious mixture of candour and caprice in the other; and like frost and fire, which some convulsion casts into momentary contact, they jostled, and then retired from each other—never more to meet till Gainsborough summoned Reynolds to his death-bed. They had, however, a better sense of natural dignity than to carry their personal animosities, as Barry afterwards did, into the Council; and if they differed in life, so in life they were mutually reconciled. Peace be with their memories!

The dates of Gainsborough's various productions cannot now be ascertained: it was one of the peculiarities of this eminent artist that he never put his name to any of his compositions, and very seldom even the date. He knew that his own happy character was too strongly impressed on his works to be denied; and thought, I suppose, that the excellence of a painting had nothing to do with the day or the year of its execution. "The Woodman and his Dog in the Storm" was one of his favourite compositions. There is a kind of rustic sublimity, new to English painting, in the heavenward look of the peasant, while the rain descends and the lightning flies. The same may be said of his "Shepherd's Boy in the Shower"—there is something inexpressibly mournful in the looks of both. The former unfortunately perished; but the sketch remains, and shows it to have been a work of the highest order.[1] He valued it at one hundred guineas, but could find no purchaser while he lived; his widow sold it for five hundred guineas, after his death, to Lord Gainsborough, whose house was subsequently burnt to the ground. Another of his own chief favourite works was the "Cottage Girl with her Dog and Pitcher," a happy and well-considered scene.[2]

Like Reynolds, he painted standing in preference to sitting; and the pencils which he used had shafts, sometimes two yards long. He stood as far from his sitter as he did from his picture, that the hues might be the same. He generally rose early, commenced painting between nine and ten o'clock, wrought for four or five hours, and then gave up the rest of the day to visits, to music, and to

[1] The engraving of this work by Simon is well known. Wornum speaks of its also having been copied in needlework.—ED.

[2] Of this work Leslie writes: "Gainsborough's barefoot child on her way to the well, with her little dog under her arm, is unequalled by anything of the kind in the world. I recollect it at the British Gallery forming part of a very noble assembly of pictures, and I could scarcely look at or think of anything else in the rooms. This inimitable work is a portrait, and not of a peasant child, but of a young lady, who appears also in his picture of the 'Girl and Pigs,' which Sir Joshua purchased." This picture is so well known by means of engraving that it needs no description. The original painting is now in the possession of Mr. Bassett of Tchedy.—ED.

domestic enjoyment. He loved to sit by the side of his wife during the evenings, and make sketches of whatever occurred to his fancy, all of which he threw below the table, save such as were more than commonly happy, and those were preserved, and either finished as sketches or expanded into paintings. In summer he had lodgings at Hampstead, for the sake of the green fields and the luxury of pure air; and in winter he was often seen refreshing his eyes with light at the window, when fatigued with close employment.

He was an admirer of elegant penmanship, and looked at a well-written letter with something of the same pleasure as at a fine landscape. His love of music was constant; and he seems to have been kept under a spell by all kinds of melodious sounds. Smith relates, in his life of Nollekens, that he once found Colonel Hamilton playing so exquisitely to Gainsborough on the violin, that he exclaimed, "Go on, and I will give you the picture of the 'Boy at the Stile,' which you have so often wished to purchase of me." The colonel proceeded, and the painter stood in speechless admiration, with the tears of rapture on his cheek. Hamilton then called a coach, and carried away the picture. This gentleman was a first-rate violin-player, and had the additional merit of having sparred with Mendoza!

Of the personal history of this distinguished man, the penury of contemporary biography prevents me from saying more. Fuseli, when editing Pilkington's "Dictionary of Painters," was, or affected to be, ignorant even of his Christian name; and so little did he feel the character of his works, that, on omitting some favourable notices in the supplement to the earlier editions, he says with a sneer, "posterity will judge whether the name of Gainsborough deserves to be ranked with those of Vandyke, Rubens, and Claude, in portrait and in landscape." With wiser taste and better feeling Walpole exclaims, "What frankness of nature in Gainsborough's landscapes, which entitle them to rank in the noblest collections!" Fuseli seems to have entertained an unaccountable dislike to our amiable and highly-gifted artist.

About a year after the promise obtained from Sheridan to attend his funeral, he went to hear the impeachment of Warren Hastings, and, sitting with his back to an open window, suddenly felt something inconceivably cold touch his neck above the shirt collar. It was accompanied with stiffness and pain. On returning home he mentioned what he felt to his wife and his niece; and, on looking, they saw a mark, about the size of a shilling, which was harder to the touch than the surrounding skin, and which he said still felt cold. The application of flannel did not remove it, and the artist, becoming alarmed, consulted, one after the other, the most eminent surgeons of London—John Hunter himself the last. They all declared there was no danger; but there was that presentiment upon Gainsborough from which none perhaps escape. He laid his hand repeatedly on his neck, and said to his sister, who had hastened to London to see him, "If this be a cancer, I am a dead man." And a cancer it proved to be. When this cruel disease fairly discovered itself, it was found to be inextricably interwoven with the threads of life, and he prepared himself for death with cheerfulness and perfect composure. He desired to be buried near his friend Kirby in Kew churchyard; and that his name only should be cut on his gravestone. He sent for Reynolds, and peace was made between them. Gainsborough exclaimed to Sir Joshua, "We are all going to heaven, and Vandyke is of the company," and immediately expired—August 2nd, 1788, in the sixty-first year of his age. Sheridan and the President attended him to the grave.

In the spring which followed the death of Gainsborough, his widow, who survived him several years, made an exhibition of his works in Pall Mall, to the amount of fifty-six pictures, and one hundred and forty-eight drawings. They were all marked for sale, and some of them sold; and the remainder were dispersed by auction. After experiencing a variety of fortune, the far-famed "Blue Boy" (the portrait of a youth in a blue dress), and the still more celebrated "Cottage Door," found their way into the gallery of Lord Grosvenor. The former has a natural elevation of look, and great ease of attitude; but the cerulean splen-

dour of his coat is at first somewhat startling.[1] The latter deserves a more particular commendation. It represents a cottage matron with an infant in her arms, and several older children around her, enjoying themselves at the door of a little rustic cabin. This lodge in the wilderness is deeply shut up in a close-wooded nook; through the shafts of the trees, glimpses of knolls and streams are obtained. There is uncommon breadth and mass about it, with a richness of colouring, a sort of brown and glossy goldenness, which is common in the works of the artist. The matron herself is the perfect beau-ideal of a youthful cottage dame—rustic loveliness exalted by natural gentility of expression.

In person Gainsborough was eminently handsome, and when he wished to please, no one had in greater perfection a ready grace and persuasive manner—gifts that cannot be acquired. It is to be regretted, that those who wrote anything concerning him were careful in noting his eccentricities and chronicling his absurdities—forgetting much that was noble and excellent in the man. Little minds retain little things. His associates, such as Jackson and Thicknesse, perceived but those weaknesses which reduced him to their own level; they were slow or unwilling to perceive those qualities which raised him above them. The companions of the artist saved the chaff of his conversation, and allowed the corn to escape. Their sole wish seems to be to show him as the poet painted himself—

> "A thing unteachable in worldly skill,
> And half an idiot too—more helpless still;"

and, but for the splendid works of the man, which exhibit a mind that could think boldly and act wisely, they had succeeded.

He never attempted literary composition; he was more

[1] This picture, which is said to have been painted, as everyone knows, to refute Sir Joshua's objection to blue in mass in a painting, is not quite conclusive, though it must be owned that Gainsborough has done wonders with the cool tones at his command. In his treatment of blue he greatly resembled Vandyke.

desirous to give than to receive instruction, and therefore paid no court to the learned. His letters are nevertheless such as few literary men have composed, they are distinguished by innocent gaiety and happy wit.[1] He flutters from subject to subject, always easy and lively; agreeable when he trifles, and instructive even when he is extravagant. He has been reproached with occasional licentiousness in conversation; and something of the sort, I must admit, peeps out here and there in his letters. He was far, however, from being habitually gross.

He was decided in his resolutions. In the year 1784 he sent to the exhibition a whole-length portrait, with instructions to hang it as low as the floor would allow. Some bye-law interposed—the council remonstrated—Gainsborough desired the picture to be returned, which was complied with—and he never sent another.[2]

His drawings are numerous and masterly: no artist has left behind him so many exquisite relics of this kind. "I have seen," said his friend Jackson, "at least a thousand, not one of which but what possesses merit, and some in a transcendent degree." Many of them are equal in point of character to his most finished performances.[3] They have all great length and singular freedom of handling. His sketches of ladies are the finest things I have ever seen. The Duchess of Devonshire shows herself in side view and in front; she seems to move and breathe among the groves of Chatsworth. The names of many are lost, but this is not important. New light, however, has lately been thrown on these perishable things by the painter's grand-nephew, Richard Lane, in whom much of his spirit survives. He has copied and published some two dozen of these fine sketches, and he ought to publish more.

[1] They are curiously like Sterne's in style. Gainsborough is said to have detested reading and to have cared little for any studies beyond those of painting and music, yet his letters show him to have been a well-informed man, who must by some means or other have managed to pick up a fair education.—Ed.

[2] See note upon the portraits of the three princesses, page 271.—Ed.

[3] There are eighty-three of these drawings in the Print Room of the British Museum. Many of them are, of course, very slight and hasty sketches, but the Gainsborough charm is apparent in them all.—Ed.

The chief works of Gainsborough are not what is usually called landscape, for he had no wish to create gardens of paradise, and leave them to the sole enjoyment of the sun and breeze. The wildest nooks of his woods have their living tenants, and in all his glades and his valleys we see the sons and daughters of men. A deep human sympathy unites us with his pencil, and this is not lessened because all its works are stamped with the image of old England. His paintings have a national look. He belongs to no school; he is not reflected from the glass of man, but from that of nature. He has not steeped his landscapes in the atmosphere of Italy, like Wilson, nor borrowed the postures of his portraits from the old masters, like Reynolds. No academy schooled down into uniformity and imitation the truly English and intrepid spirit of Gainsborough.[1]

It must not, however, be denied, that his productions are sometimes disfigured by the impatience of his nature, and the fiery haste in which he wrought. Wishing to do quickly what his mind conceived strongly, he often neglected, in the dashing vigour of his hand, many of those lesser graces which lend art so much of its attractiveness. He felt the whole indeed at once; he was possessed fully with the sentiment of his subject; he struck off his favourite works at one continuous heat of thought, and all is clear, connected, and consistent. But, like nature herself, he performed some of his duties with a careless haste; and in many, both of his portraits and his landscapes, we see evident marks of inattention and hurry.[2]

[1] Gainsborough is an artist who is very well represented, both as to portrait and landscape, in the National Gallery, where there are no fewer than twelve works by his hand, including one of his finest portraits—that of Orpin, parish clerk of Bradford. The simple and delightful portrait of Mrs. Siddons, in hat and feathers, and the celebrated landscapes known as the "Market Cart" and the "Watering Place" are also there.—Ed.

[2] "Gainsborough," says Frederick Wedmore in his suggestive "Studies in English Art," "was above all things in his best time a sketcher, an indicator, a suggestive poet, who, using his own imagination freely, never dispensed with yours. In the landscape about him he conceived a picture; he conveyed his conception; he did not finally realize it. Even his

"It is certain," says Reynolds, "that all those odd scratches and marks which, on a close examination, are so observable in Gainsborough's pictures, and which, even to experienced painters, appear rather the effect of accident than design—this chaos, this uncouth and shapeless appearance—by a kind of magic, at a certain distance, assumes form, and all the parts seem to drop into their proper places, so that we can hardly forbear acknowledging the full effect of diligence under the appearance of chance and hasty negligence. That Gainsborough himself considered this peculiarity in his manner, and the power it possesses in exciting surprise, as a beauty in his works, may be inferred from the eager desire which we know he always expressed that his pictures at the exhibition should be seen near as well as at a distance." The President, however, weakens this vindication a little, when, in the succeeding sentences, he says, "the imagination supplies the rest, and perhaps more satisfactorily to the spectator, if not more exactly than the artist with all his care could have done." Sir Joshua, no doubt, felt all this: but artists must not count on eyes and imaginations such as fell to the lot of the President.

There is a charm about the children running wild in the landscapes of Gainsborough, which is more deeply felt by comparing them with those of Reynolds. The children of Sir Joshua are indeed beautiful creations, free, artless, and lovely; but they seem all to have been nursed in velvet laps and fed with golden spoons. There is a rustic grace, an untamed wildness, about the children of the other, which speak of the country and of neglected toilets. They are the offspring of nature, running free among woods as wild as themselves. They are not afraid of disordering their satins and wetting their kid shoes. They roll on the greensward, burrow like rabbits, and dabble in the running streams daily.

earliest works have somewhere, in sea or sky, something of abstraction and generalization; and as the time proceeded and mind and method matured, the abstraction was more marked, the generalization wider, but both, of course, were more serenely ordered, were less faulty, less partial and accidental."—Ed.

In this the works of Reynolds and Gainsborough are unlike each other—but both differ more materially from the great painters of Italy. The infants of Raphael, Titian, or Correggio, are not meant for mortals, but for divinities. We hardly think of mothers' bosoms when we look at them. We admire—we can scarcely love them so much as we do the healthy children of our two eminent countrymen.

BENJAMIN WEST.

THE life of West has been written by the ingenious author of "Annals of the Parish," with such minuteness of research and general accuracy of information, that little may seem to be left for a new biographer, but to re-model his narrative, correct some dates, and add a few anecdotes. Something more, however, is necessary. He who writes the biography of any living person is fettered much even as to matters of fact—much more in his expression of feelings and opinions—and not only was the President alive when Mr. Galt composed his memoir, but they were intimate friends.

John West, the father of Benjamin, was of that family settled at Long-Crendon, in Buckinghamshire, which produced Colonel James West, the friend and companion in arms of John Hampden. Upon one occasion, in the course of a conversation in Buckingham Palace, respecting his picture of "The Institution of the Garter," West happened to make some allusion to his English descent; when the Marquis of Buckingham, to the manifest pleasure of the King, declared that the Wests of Long-Crendon were undoubted descendants of the Lord Delaware, renowned in the wars of Edward the Third and the Black Prince, and that the artist's likeness had therefore a right to a place amongst those of the nobles and warriors in his historical picture.

The warlike propensities of this branch of the race had been long extinguished; in 1667 they had embraced the peaceful tenets of the Quakers, and emigrated to America with some other families desirous of escaping from the contests and distractions of their native isle. John West remained behind only till his education was completed at the Quakers' Seminary at Uxbridge: he then followed his family to Philadelphia—married Sarah Pearson (whose

grandfather was the confidential friend of William Penn, and aided him in founding the State of Pennsylvania)—and settled at Springfield in that province. One part of the marriage portion of his wife was a negro slave, an affectionate and faithful creature; but in his intercourse, as a merchant, with Barbadoes, John West happened to witness the cruelties to which certain unhappy Africans were subjected, and—touched in conscience—the worthy Quaker liberated his bondsman and retained him as a hired servant. Others of the Society of Friends followed his example—the charitable feeling spread far and wide—it was privately taught and publicly preached, and finally established as one of the tenets of that people, that no person could remain a member of their community who held a human creature in slavery.

When Mrs. West, already the mother of nine children, was again about to be confined, she went to hear one Edward Peckover preach in the fields near her residence. The subject which he chose was popular with such an audience—the corrupt and degraded condition of the Old World—the pure morality and flourishing establishments of the New. The language of the preacher was vehement and inflammatory. He pictured the licentious manners and atheistical principles of France, and the love of sordid gain which stained the character of England; and declared that the day and the hour were at hand when those countries would be desolated with the tempest of God's vengeance—the mass of the atheists and money-changers swallowed up—and the terrified remnant compelled to seek refuge in happy America. The pains of premature labour came upon Mrs. West during this terrible sermon—she shrieked out—the women formed a circle round her, and carried her from the field; and such was her agitation of mind that she had nearly expired before she reached her own house. She continued dangerously ill for twelve days, when, on October 10th, 1738, she was safely delivered of her youngest son, Benjamin.

This made some impression on the mind of John West, and as the presumption of man generally interprets such occurrences in his own favour, he imagined that something

more than common was indicated for the fortunes of the child. Peckover, glad, no doubt, to find that his wild sermon instead of rebuke brought praise, warmly supported the belief of the credulous Quaker, and desired him to watch over his son with more than ordinary solicitude. "For a child," said he, "sent into the world under such remarkable circumstances will assuredly prove a wonderful man." One lucky prediction establishes the fame of the prophet, but there are thousands on whose future fame friends and parents fondly reckoned, in whose favour "remarkable circumstances" too condescended to occur, and who remain inglorious in spite of the stars.

From one thus ushered into life by sermon and prophecy much was looked for. Nothing, however, happened till his seventh year, when little Benjamin was placed with a fly-flap in his hand to watch the sleeping infant of his eldest sister while his mother gathered flowers in the garden. As he sat by the cradle, the child smiled in sleep; he was struck with its beauty, and seeking some paper, drew its portrait in red and black ink. His mother returned, and snatching the paper, which he sought to conceal, exclaimed to her daughter, "I declare he has made a likeness of little Sally!" She took him in her arms and kissed him fondly. The drawing was shown to her husband, the prediction of Peckover recurred to his fancy, and he expressed his belief that the boy would become some day very eminent. If he meant as an artist, how this was to come to pass must have seemed, however, not so clear: there were neither professors, paintings, nor prints, amongst the primitives of Pennsylvania.

Yet West was born amidst circumstances not unfavourable to the development of his powers. The benevolent fraternity of Quakers had that simplicity of manners and that serenity of look which artists love; while around them the nations of Europe had scattered their children as thick as the trees of the forest. The gay Frenchman, the plodding Dutchman, the energetic Englishman, and the laborious Scot—all were there, each emblazoned with the peculiarities, and speaking the peculiar language of his native soil. The wilderness, too, had its picturesque

tribes, who presented a school of nature for the study of the naked figure; and it appears that West was early aware of some of these advantages.

When he was some eight years old, a party of roaming Indians paid their summer visit to Springfield, and were much pleased with the rude sketches which the boy had made of birds, and fruits, and flowers, for in such drawings many of the wild Americans have both taste and skill. They showed him some of their own workmanship, and taught him how to prepare the red and yellow colours with which they stained their weapons; to these his mother added indigo, and thus he was possessed of the three primary colours. The Indians, unwilling to leave such a boy in ignorance of their other acquirements, taught him archery, in which he became expert enough to shoot refractory birds, which refused to come on milder terms for their likenesses. The future President of the British Academy, taking lessons in painting and in archery from a tribe of Cherokees, might be a subject worthy of the pencil.

The wants of West increased with his knowledge. He could draw, and he had obtained colours, but how to lay those colours skilfully on he could not well conceive. A neighbour informed him that this was done with brushes formed of camels' hair: there were no camels in America, and he had recourse to the cat, from whose back and tail he supplied his wants. The cat was a favourite, and the altered condition of her fur was imputed to disease, till the boy's confession explained the cause, much to the amusement of his father, who nevertheless rebuked him, but more in affection than in anger. Better help was at hand. One Pennington, a merchant, was so much pleased with the sketches of his cousin Benjamin, that he sent him a box of paints and pencils, with canvas prepared for the easel, and six engravings by Grevling. West placed the box on a chair at his bedside, and was unable to sleep. He rose with the dawn, carried his canvas and colours to the garret, hung up the engravings, prepared a palette, and commenced copying. So completely was he under the control of this species of enchantment, that he absented

himself from school, laboured secretly and incessantly, and without interruption for several days, when the anxious inquiries of the schoolmaster introduced his mother to his *studio* with no pleasure in her looks. But her anger subsided as she looked upon his performance. He had avoided copyism, and made a picture composed from two of the engravings, telling a new story, and coloured with a skill and effect which was in her sight surprising. "She kissed him," says Galt, who had the story from the artist, "with transports of affection, and assured him that she would not only intercede with his father to pardon him for having absented himself from school, but would go herself to the master and beg that he might not be punished. Sixty-seven years afterwards the writer of these memoirs had the gratification to see this piece in the same room with the sublime painting of 'Christ Rejected,' on which occasion the painter declared to him that there were inventive touches of art in his first and juvenile essay, which, with all his subsequent knowledge and experience, he had not been able to surpass." A similar story is related of Canova—he visited his native place after having risen into eminence, looked earnestly on the performances of his youth, and said, sorrowfully, "I have been *walking* but not *climbing*."

In the ninth year of his age he accompanied his relative Pennington to Philadelphia, and executed a view of the banks of the river, which pleased a painter, by name Williams, at that time residing there. This man's works —the first specimens of true art that the boy had seen— affected West so much that he burst into tears. The artist was surprised, and declared, like Peckover, that Benjamin would be a remarkable man. "What books do you read?" said Williams; "you should read the lives of great men." "I read the Bible and the Testament," replied West; "and I know the history of Adam, and Joseph, and Moses, and David, and Solomon, and the Apostles." "You are a fine boy," said the other, "and ought to be encouraged. I shall send you two books, which you will like much." He sent him, accordingly, Du Fresnoy and Richardson, with an invitation to call,

whenever he pleased, and see his pictures. The books and the pictures made the love of art overcome all other feelings, and he returned home, resolved to become a painter. John West was struck with the growing intelligence and expanding mind of his son; his sketches and drawings were now openly encouraged, and that he was destined to be a great artist grew more and more the opinion of the family.[1]

One of his schoolfellows allured him on a half-holiday from trap and ball, by promising him a ride to a neighbouring plantation. "Here is the horse, bridled and saddled," said his friend, "so come, get up behind me." "Behind you!" said Benjamin; "I will ride behind nobody." "Oh, very well," replied the other, "I will ride behind you, so mount." He mounted accordingly, and away they rode. "This is the last ride I shall have," said his companion, "for some time. To-morrow I am to be apprenticed to a tailor." "A tailor!" exclaimed West; "you will surely never be a tailor?" "Indeed but I

[1] The various stories told of West's early life read more like romance than genuine fact; yet there seems no reason to doubt their substantial truth, though probably they have got coloured a little in narration. The simple circumstance of an artist arising in the midst of a settlement of Quakers in Pennsylvania, in the eighteenth century, is indeed in itself sufficiently remarkable, and certainly does not tend to confirm Taine's theory of the determining "milieu" in the production of the work of art. We cannot conceive any "milieu" less promising than that into which West was born; yet doubtless all the portents which accompanied his birth, and led his relations to imagine he would prove a prodigy, had their share in determining the fact. He seems always to have believed in himself and his own high destiny; and what is the more surprising, the quiet Quaker lad made everybody else believe in him. No one, at the beginning of his career, seems to have doubted his genius. Even Leslie, when he first came to London, tells us that he thought West as great a painter as Raphael; and Sir Thomas Lawrence speaks of him as "unequalled at any period below the schools of the Caracci." We cannot now understand the enthusiasm that his poor, tame works once excited; for, like many other painters who have shone very brightly in their own time, West's star has now set, and general criticism is indisposed to allow to his paintings even the merits they really possess. The inherent failing in all his works seems to be that they lack inspiration. He has no spirit, no life, this rival of Michelangelo and Raphael, to breathe into them, and therefore they remain, these calmly correct works of his, mere dead bodies of paintings, with no power to stir our hearts.—Ed.

shall," replied the other; "it is a good trade. What do you intend to be, Benjamin?"—"A painter." "A painter! what sort of trade is a painter? I never heard of it before."—"A painter," said this humble son of a Philadelphia Quaker, "is the companion of kings and emperors." "You are surely mad," said the embryo tailor; "there are neither kings nor emperors in America."—"Aye, but there are plenty in other parts of the world." "And do you really intend to be a tailor?"—"Indeed I do; there is nothing surer." "Then you may ride alone," said the future companion of kings and emperors, leaping down, "I will not ride with one willing to be a tailor." This incident, it is said, together with his skill in drawing, which now began to be talked of, drove the schoolboys of Springfield to walls and boards, with chalk and ochre. This was only a temporary enthusiasm, and soon subsided; yet many of their drawings, West afterwards said, were worthy of the students of a regular academy. Their proficiency, then, had surpassed his own; for even when at Rome he was unwilling to show his drawings, considering them as imperfect and incorrect.

He was often at a loss for the proper materials of his art; pencils, and colours, and panels were not then included in the articles of daily demand in Pennsylvania. A carpenter, whose name is forgotten, gave him three broad and beautiful poplar boards, and planed them smoothly; these, when covered with groups in ink, chalk, and charcoal, were purchased for a dollar each by a neighbour of the name of Wayne; and Dr. Morris at the same time gave him money to buy panels and pencils for future compositions. "These were the first public patrons of the artist," says Galt, "and it is at his own request that their names are thus particularly inserted."

That a boy who had some skill in painting lived at Springfield began to be spoken of; and Mr. Flower, a justice of Chester, looked at his works, and obtained leave from his parents to take him for a few weeks to his house. A young English lady was governess to his daughters; she was well acquainted with art, and was also intimate with the Greek and Latin poets, and loved to point out to

st the most picturesque passages. He had
eard of Greece or of Rome, or of the heroes,
, poets, painters, and historians whom they
ed, and he listened, while the lady spoke of
an enthusiasm which, after an experience of
uty years in the world, he loved to live over
His residence here introduced him to Ross, a
f some note, who lived in the neighbouring town
aster; and Mrs. Ross, who was eminently beautiful,
to sit to West for her portrait. The people of
ter had taste and intelligence; they saw him per-
his task with much ability, and came in such crowds
to the boy, that he had some trouble in meeting
r demands. Those citizens were kindly persons and
ily pleased. A gunsmith of Lancaster, who had a
sical turn, proposed a painting of the death of Socrates.
t had heard of Socrates, and forthwith made a sketch
h his employer called clever; but he had now begun
eel his deficiencies and see his difficulties. "I have
herto painted faces," said West, "and people clothed;
what am I to do with the slave who presents the poison?—
he ought, I think, to be naked." Henry, the gunsmith,
went to his shop, and returned with one of his workmen, a
handsome man, and half-naked, saying, "There is your
model." He introduced him accordingly into the picture
—which excited some attention.

West was now fifteen years old; and though the school has been more than once spoken of, his education up to this period had been sadly neglected: indeed, at no period of his life had he any claim to be called an educated man. He was the first and last President of our Academy who found spelling a difficulty.

Dr. Smith, a gentleman of considerable classical attainments, perceived his deficiency, and generously undertook the part of instructor; but the Cherokee Indians seem to have been the only preceptors who went wisely to work with him. This new master pursued a strange enough method. "He regarded him," says Galt, "as destined to be a painter, and on this account did not impose upon him those grammatical exercises of language which are

usually required from the young student
but directed his attention to those incid
likely to interest his fancy, and furnish him,
period, with subjects for the easel." This
done well with a fairer scholar—with Wes
desired that his imagination should catch t
spirit of antiquity, he ought to have begun
beginning. It is needless to expect a strong
we have only scratched the surface of the soil.

Whilst picking up these classical crumbs th
was attacked by a fever. Every fresh aspect of l
life had something in it remarkable and romantic.
good medicine and good nursing began to remove hi
plaint, another adversary invaded his repose. This
shadowy illusion, which, like an image in a dream,
ever unstable, and changing shape as well as hue,
became first visible in the form of a white cow, w
entering at one side of the house, walked over his
and vanished. A sow and a litter of pigs succeeded.
sister thought him delirious, and sent for a physician:
his pulse had a recovering beat in it; his skin was mois
and cool; his thirst was gone, and everything betokenc
convalescence. While the doctor stood puzzled about
disease which had such healthy symptoms, he was alarmed
by West assuring him that he saw the figures of several
friends passing at that moment across the roof. Conceiving these to be the professional visions of a raving artist, he prescribed a draught which would have brought sleep to all the eyes of Argus, and departed. As he went, up rose West, and discovered that all those visitations came through a knot hole in the shutters, which threw into the darkened room whatever forms were passing along the street at the time. He called in his sister, showed her the apparitions, gliding along the ceiling, then laid his hand on the aperture, and all vanished. On recovering he made various experiments, which he communicated to Williams; who found it to be what Butler calls "a new-found old invention." He produced a London *camera obscura;* and West contented himself with the praise due to collateral ingenuity.

On returning to Springfield, his future career became the subject of anxious deliberation. Some of his best friends were in favour of his making art his profession; his mother was desirous of distinction for her youngest child, and the father, influenced by the prophecy of Peckover, at length resolved on submitting the matter to the wisdom of the Society to which he belonged.

The Friends met—and the spirit of speech first descended on one John Williamson. "To John West and Sarah Pearson," said this Western luminary, "a man-child hath been born, on whom God hath conferred some remarkable gifts of mind; and you have all heard that, by something amounting to inspiration, the youth has been induced to study the art of painting. It is true that our tenets refuse to own the utility of that art to mankind, but it seemeth to me that we have considered the matter too nicely. God has bestowed on this youth a genius for art—shall we question His wisdom? Can we believe that He gives such rare gifts but for a wise and a good purpose? I see the Divine hand in this; we shall do well to sanction the art and encourage this youth." The Quakers, persuaded by this sagacious enthusiast, or moved by the belief that the worldly fame which accompanies genius would shed a new halo on their sect, acknowledged the boy's powers upon the principle of implicit faith—gave their unanimous consent, like the "Brethren" in the "Alchymist," to have their lead turned into gold, and forthwith summoned the youth, in whom so many hopes centred, before them.

He came and took his station in the middle of the room—his father on his right hand, his mother on his left, while around him flocked the whole Quaker community. It was one of the women that spake first; but the words of Williamson are alone remembered. "Painting," said he, "has been hitherto employed to embellish life, to preserve voluptuous images, and add to the sensual gratifications of man. For this we classed it among vain and merely ornamental things, and excluded it from amongst us. But this is not the principle, but the mis-employment of painting. In wise and in pure hands it rises in the scale of moral excellence, and displays a loftiness of senti-

ment and a devout dignity worthy of the contemplation of Christians. I think genius is given by God for some high purpose. What the purpose is let us not inquire—it will be manifest in His own good time and way. He hath in this remote wilderness endowed with the rich gifts of a superior spirit this youth who has now our consent to cultivate his talents for art—may it be demonstrated in his life and works that the gifts of God have not been bestowed in vain, nor the motives of the beneficent inspiration, which induces us to suspend the strict operation of our tenets, prove barren of religious or moral effect!" "At the conclusion of this address," says Galt, "the women rose and kissed the young artist, and the men one by one laid their hands on his head."

That this scene made a strong impression on the mind of West, we have his own assurance; he looked upon himself as expressly dedicated to art—and considered this release from the strict tenets of his religious community as implying a covenant on his part to employ his powers on subjects holy and pure. The grave simplicity of the Quaker continued to the last in the looks and manners of the artist, and the moral rectitude and internal purity of the man were diffused through all his productions.

Being now left more to the freedom of his own will, West deviated into a course not at all professional, but for which the accommodating eloquence of a John Williamson might have conceived a ready apology. He became a soldier. The Friends had not included this among those pure and pious pursuits which they ascribed to the future painter of history; they expressed, however, neither surprise nor sorrow for this backsliding in Benjamin, nor did they either admonish or remonstrate. He took up a musket —inspired with his enthusiasm young Wayne, afterwards a distinguished officer—and joining the troops of General Forbes, proceeded in search of the relics of that gallant army lost in the desert by the unfortunate General Braddock.[1]

[1] Allan Cunningham is mistaken here. It was not Benjamin, but Samuel West, an elder brother, who accompanied Forbes's party. Benjamin might have been inspired for a time with military ardour, but he

To West and his companions were added a select body of Indians; these again were accompanied by several officers of the Old Highland Watch—the well-known Forty-second, commanded by the most anxious person of the whole detachment, Major Sir Peter Halket, who had lost his father and brother in that unhappy expedition. Though many months had elapsed since the battle, and though time, the fowls of the air, the beasts of the field, and wild men more savage than they, had done their worst, Halket was not without hopes of finding the remains of his father and his brother, as an Indian warrior assured him that he had seen an elderly officer drop dead beneath a large and remarkable tree, and a young subaltern, who hastened to his aid, fall mortally wounded across the body. After a long march through the woods, they approached the fatal valley. They were affected at seeing the bones of men, who, escaping wounded from invisible enemies, had sunk down and expired as they leaned against the trees, and they were shocked to see in other places the relics of their countrymen mingled with the ashes of savage bivouacs.

When they reached the principal scene of destruction, the Indian guide looked anxiously round, darted into the wood, and in a few seconds raised a shrill cry. Halket and West hastened to the place—the Indian pointed out the tree—a circle of soldiers was drawn round it, whilst others removed the leaves of the forest which had fallen since the fight. They found two skeletons—one lying across the other—Halket looked at the skulls—said faintly "It is my father!" and dropped senseless in the arms of his companions. On recovering, he said, "I know who it is by that artificial tooth." They dug a grave in the desert, covered the bones with a Highland plaid, and interred them reverently. This scene, at once picturesque and pious, made a lasting impression on the artist's mind. After he had painted the "Death of Wolfe," he proposed the finding of the bones of the Halkets as an historical subject; and, describing to Lord Grosvenor the gloomy

does not seem to have gone on any campaign, and could only have received a "lasting impression" of the weird scene of Halket's burial from his brother's description.—Ed.

wood, the wild Indians, the passionate grief of the son, and the sympathy of his companions, said he conceived it would form a picture full of dignity and sentiment. His lordship thought otherwise. The subject which genius chooses for itself is, however, in most cases the best. The sober imagination of West had here a twofold excitement —he had witnessed the scene, and it was American—and, had Lord Grosvenor encouraged him to embody his conception, the result would, I doubt not, have been a worthy companion to the "Death of Wolfe."

West was called from the first and last of his fields by a messenger announcing the dangerous illness of his mother. He hastened home and arrived only in time to receive the welcome of her eyes and her mute blessing. He loved and honoured her much—and when he was old and grey, recalled her looks, and dwelt on her expressions of fondness and of hope, with a sadness which he wished neither to subdue nor conceal. With the spirit of his mother, the charm seemed to have departed from his father's house; he seldom spoke of it afterwards, and soon forsook it for Philadelphia, where he established himself as a portrait painter in the eighteenth year of his age.

His extreme youth, the peculiar circumstances of his history, and his undoubted merit, brought many sitters. His prices were very low—two guineas and a half for a head, and five guineas for a half length;—and the money thus laboriously earned was treasured prudently—to secure, at some future day, the means of travel and study. Young as he was, he had the sagacity to see that travel influenced the public opinion, and that study, and long study, was necessary for him if he really wished to excel. He knew that the master-works of art were in other lands, and on Rome especially he had already set his heart. So little, indeed, of the genius of the Old World had found its way to the New, that when the accidental capture of a Spanish vessel had placed a "St. Ignatius" of the Murillo school in the gallery of Governor Hamilton, West copied it without being either aware of its excellence, or even to what style of art it pertained. Dr. Smith admired so much the

posture and sentiment of the saint, that he persuaded the young artist to paint his portrait in the same position—a kind of appropriation which saves time and invention, and can give little fame. With better taste he painted the "Trial of Susanna," a work which he loved long after to talk of and describe.[1]

From Philadelphia, after painting the heads of all who desired it, he went to New York; with which place he was not at first much delighted. Eager traffickers from all quarters thronged her streets and quays, and the young painter was elbowed into the shade by those

> "Who darkly grub this earthly hole
> in low pursuit."

Now and then, however, a merchant, after a successful bargain, sat down in the joy of the moment for his portrait; and the wandering mariner, who found markets on the rise and gains on the increase, hung up his likeness also in the Temple of Fortune. Though art was not in high honour, West, nevertheless, found its pursuit profitable; he raised his price of a half length to ten guineas; and the spirit of amassing money seemed in a fair way of making him its own, when a letter from Smith recalled his thoughts to Italy.

The Italian harvest having failed, a consignment of wheat and flour was sent from the New World to the Old, and put under the charge of one of the Allens of Philadelphia, who offered West a passage to Leghorn. It happened that a New York merchant, of the name of Kelly, was at that time sitting to West for his portrait, and to this gentleman the artist spoke of his intended journey, and represented how much he expected a year or two of study in Rome would improve his skill and taste. Kelly paid him for his portrait—gave him a letter to his agents in Philadelphia, shook him by the hand, and wished him a good voyage. Ere he reached his native place, after an

[1] For this work Galt says he used a canvas of about the same size as a half length portrait. He introduced into it as many as forty figures, drawn principally from live models. This was certainly an ambitious beginning for a young untaught artist.—Ed.

absence of eleven months, all the arrangements for his departure had been completed by Smith; and when he presented the letter of Kelly, he found that it contained an order from that generous merchant to his agent to pay him fifty guineas—"a present to aid in his equipment for Italy." The plodding citizens of New York rose in the painter's estimation at least fifty per cent. Two merchants in Leghorn, Messrs. Jackson and Rutherford, received him kindly, and, with introductory letters to some leading men in his pocket, he departed for Rome.

West, like most men of any imagination who visit Rome, was always fond of describing his first impressions. He had walked on whilst his travelling companion was baiting the horses, and had reached a rising ground which offered him a view far and wide. The sun was newly risen, all was calm and clear, and he saw before him a spacious campaign bounded by green hills, and in the midst a wilderness of noble ruins, over which towered the nobler dome of Saint Peter's. A broken column at his feet, which served as a milestone, informed him that he was within eight thousand paces of the ancient Mistress of the World, and a sluggish boor, clad in rough goat skins, driving his flocks to pasture amidst the ruins of a temple, told him how far she had fallen. In the midst of a reverie, in which he was comparing the treacherous peasants of the Campagna with the painted barbarians of North America, he entered Rome. This was on the 10th of July, 1760, and in the twenty-second year of his age.

When it was known that a young American had come to study Raphael and Michael Angelo, some curiosity was excited among the Roman virtuosi. The first fortunate exhibitor of this Lion from the Western wilderness was Lord Grantham; he invited West to dinner, and afterwards carried him to an evening party, where he found almost all those persons to whom he had brought letters of introduction. Amongst the rest was Cardinal Albani, who, though old and blind, had such delicacy of touch that he was considered supreme in all matters of judgment regarding medals and intaglios. "I have the honour," said Lord Grantham, "to present a young American, who

has a letter for your Eminence, and who has come to Italy for the purpose of studying the Fine Arts." The Cardinal knew so little of the New World, that he conceived an American must needs be a savage. "Is he black or white?" said the aged virtuoso, holding out both hands, that he might have the satisfaction of touching at least this new wonder. Lord Grantham smiled, and said, "He is fair—very fair." "What! as fair as I am?" exclaimed the prelate. Now the complexion of this churchman was a deep olive—that of West more than commonly fair—and as they stood together the company smiled. "As fair as the Cardinal," became for a while proverbial.

Others, who had the use of their eyes, seemed to consider the young American as at most a better kind of savage; and, accordingly, were curious to watch him. They wished to try what effect the "Apollo," the "Venus," and the works of Raphael would have upon him, and "thirty of the most magnificent equipages in the capital of Christendom, and filled with some of the most erudite characters in Europe," says Galt, "conducted the young Quaker to view the masterpieces of art." It was agreed that the "Apollo" should be first submitted to his view: the statue was enclosed in a case, and when the keeper threw open the doors, West unconsciously exclaimed, "My God —a young Mohawk warrior!" The Italians were surprised and mortified with the comparison of their noblest statue to a wild savage; and West, perceiving the unfavourable impression, proceeded to remove it. He described the Mohawks—the natural elegance and admirable symmetry of their persons—the elasticity of their limbs, and their motions free and unconstrained. "I have seen them often," he continued, "standing in the very attitude of this Apollo, and pursuing with an intense eye the arrow which they had just discharged from the bow."[1] The Italians cleared their moody brows, and allowed that a better criticism had rarely been pronounced. West was no longer a barbarian.

Of his claim to mix with men of genius, however, he

[1] West related this anecdote himself in a discourse delivered when he was President of the Royal Academy.—Ed.

had as yet submitted no proof: he had indeed shown his drawings to Mengs and to Hamilton, but they were, as he confessed, destitute of original merit—nor, indeed, could they be commended for either neatness or accuracy. He waited on Lord Grantham—"I cannot," said he, "produce a finished sketch, like the other students, because I have never been instructed in drawing; but I can paint a little, and if you will do me the honour to sit for your portrait that I may show it to Mengs, you will do me a great kindness." His lordship consented, the portrait was painted—and, the name of the artist being kept secret, the picture was placed in the gallery of Crespigni, where amateurs and artists were invited to see it. It was known that Lord Grantham was sitting to Mengs, and to him some ascribed the portrait, though they thought the colouring surpassed his other compositions. Dance, an Englishman of sense and acuteness, looked at it closely: "The colouring surpasses that of Mengs," he observed, "but the drawing is neither so fine nor so good." The company engaged eagerly in the discussion—Crespigni seized the proper moment, and said, "It is not painted by Mengs." "By whom, then?" they exclaimed, "for there is no other painter in Rome capable of doing anything so good." "By that young gentleman," said the other, turning to West, who sat uneasy and agitated. The English held out their hands—the Italians ran and embraced him.

Mengs himself soon arrived—he looked at the picture, and spoke with great kindness. "Young man, you have no occasion to come to Rome to learn to paint. What I therefore recommend to you is this:—Examine everything here worthy of attention—making drawings of some half-dozen of the best statues. Go to Florence and study in the galleries—go to Bologna and study the works of the Carracci, and then proceed to Venice and view the productions of Tintoretto, Titian, and Paul Veronese. When all this is accomplished, return to Rome, paint an historical picture, exhibit it publicly, and then the opinion which will be expressed of your talents will determine the line of art which you ought to follow." A dangerous illness inter-

posed, and for a time prevented West from following this common but sensible counsel. The change of scene, the presence of works of first-rate excellence, and the anxiety to distinguish himself, preyed upon him—sleep deserted his pillow, a fever followed, and by the advice of his physicians he returned to Leghorn, where, after a lingering sickness of eleven months, he was completely cured.

Those who befriend genius when it is struggling for distinction, befriend the world; and their names should be held in remembrance. There is good sense and right feeling in the reply of Mahomet to the insinuation of the fair Ayesha, that his first wife Cadijah was old and unlovely, and that he had now a better in her place. "No, by Alla!—there never was a better—she *believed* in me when men despised me; she relieved my wants when I was poor and persecuted by the world." The names of Smith, Hamilton, Kelly, Allen, Jackson, Rutherford, and Lord Grantham must be dear to all the admirers of West—they aided him in the infancy of his fame and fortune; they cheered him when he was drooping or desponding, and watched over his person and his purse with the vigilance of true friendship. The story of his success with the portrait of Lord Grantham found its way to Chief-Justice Allen, at Philadelphia, when he was at dinner with Governor Hamilton. "I regard this young man," said this worthy man, "as an honour to his country; and as he is the first that America has sent out to cultivate the Fine Arts, he shall not be frustrated in his studies, for I shall send him whatever money he may require." "I think with you, sir," said Hamilton; "but you must not have all the honour to yourself; allow me to unite with you in the responsibility of the credit." Some time afterwards, when West went to take up ten pounds from his agents, the last of the sum with which he had commenced his studies, one of the partners opened a letter, and said, "I am instructed to give you unlimited credit; you will have the goodness to ask for what sum you please." It is not without cause that Mr. Galt says, "The munificence of the Medici was equalled by these American magistrates."

West, with recovered health and a heavier purse, was

now able to follow the counsel of Mengs. He visited Florence, Bologna, and Venice. The colouring of Titian was a secret into which he strove in vain to penetrate, nor did the examination and dissection of what Italians call the "internal light" of his productions solve the mystery. Reynolds acquired the profitable secret and kept it to himself,[1] and many years afterwards West imagined that he had obtained it too. It is doubted by some whether either ever mastered it completely. It is certain that they did not succeed in using it with the good fortune of Titian, whose colouring extinguishes all modern works as sunshine overwhelms candlelight. The pure primary colours which West afterwards harmonized with the semi-tints fall far short of the lucid splendour of Titian—they lost by time, from which the colours of the Italian appear to gain an increase of lustre.[2]

Having seen all that was worth seeing, West now returned to Rome. Romance and prophecy seemed to have marked the calm and serious Quaker for their own—a fresh adventure was ready for him at Rome. He was conversing in the British Coffee-house with Gavin Hamilton, when an old man, with a guitar suspended from his shoulder, offered his services as an improvisator bard. "Here is an American," said the wily Scot, "come to study the Fine Arts in Rome; take him for your theme, and it is a magnificent one." West, who never in his life conceived what a joke meant, sat grave and steady like one of his own sitters, while the minstrel unslung his guitar, and, with a glance that told Hamilton he knew what to do, burst into song. At first he was something mystical, till he saw that his subject had a reasonable gift of credulity, and then he tried plainer words. "I behold," he sung, "in this youth an instrument chosen by heaven to create in his native country a taste for those arts which have elevated the nature of man—an assurance that his land will be the re-

[1] If he discovered it why was he always experimenting, and why have not his pictures lasted better?—Ed.

[2] West had no true feeling for colour. There is no richness of tone or variety of tint in his pictures, though they are often painted in bright colours.—Ed.

fuge of science and knowledge, when in the old age of Europe they shall have forsaken her shores. All things of heavenly origin move westward, and Truth and Art have their periods of light and darkness. Rejoice, O Rome, for thy spirit immortal and undecayed now spreads towards a new world, where, like the soul of man in Paradise, it will be perfected more and more." On the raving of this wily mendicant, West bestowed both money and tears; and even in riper years he was willing to consider this as another prophecy.

He accompanied the Abbatè Grant to see high mass performed in Saint Peter's. At the elevation of the Host, when all were silent and kneeling, a voice exclaimed in the accent of Scotland, "O Lord, cast not the kirk down on them for this abomination!" This burst of enthusiasm, in a strange tongue, was received by all, save the Scottish priest, as a lively manifestation of Catholic zeal. Grant was alarmed for his countryman, and advised him to be quiet during the rest of the ceremony, unless he desired to be torn to pieces by the religious mob. This man had travelled to Rome, with a fixed resolution either to convert the Pope to Calvinism or become a martyr. He yielded for the moment to Grant's entreaties: but next day reappeared in the same place, demanded the conversion of his Holiness, and the downfall of Popery, and to his exceeding great joy was seized by the Inquisition and consigned to a dungeon. The last of the princes of that unfortunate race who sat so long, and often so worthily, on the thrones of Scotland and England, interposed, and sent the resolute presbyterian home in safety.

West was not so far dazzled by those romantic occurrences as to forget his studies. He painted a picture of "Cimon and Iphigenia," and another of "Angelica and Medora," which confirmed the favourable opinions expressed by his friends, and opened the way to those marks of academic approbation usually bestowed on fortunate artists. Having studied the great Italian masters, and acquired much useful knowledge in the trick of colour and composition, he had no wish to remain in Rome—his heart was with his native land. He, however, resolved to visit the Island of

his fathers, and prepared for his journey. Of Rome he has left us this brief and pithy memorandum: "Michael Angelo has not succeeded in giving a probable character to any of his works, the Moses perhaps excepted. The works of Raphael grow daily more interesting, natural, and noble."

At Parma he was elected a member of the Academy—an honour which Florence and Bologna had conferred before—and presented them with a copy of the "St. Jerome" of Correggio, of such excellence that the reigning prince desired to see the artist. He went to court, and, to the utter confusion of the attendants, appeared with his hat on. The prince was no stranger to the character of the Quakers, nor to the condescension of the British law in their favour. He was, moreover, a lover of William Penn. He received the young artist with complacency, and dismissed him with many expressions of regard. On reaching one of the French frontier towns he was insulted by the populace, who considered their manufactures as ruined by the English. Again, something like prophecy mingles with the explanation of the magistrate who protected him. "The ignorant people (said he) blame England, when they should blame our own government. But the court of France is become a band of profligates—the truly great and good are banished from the palace; this cannot last long. Frenchmen will one day take a terrible revenge for the insults which they are doomed to suffer from those who pander to the prodigality of the court." These words were uttered twenty-four years before the Revolution. West cannot be born, nor choose his profession, nor enjoy himself in a coffee-house, nor travel through France without the influence or the accompaniment of prediction. Of French art he conceived a mean opinion. It was, said he, deficient in simplicity; an air of studied affectation was breathed over it; and the absence of the nobler spirit of painting was sought to be concealed by the petty graces and brilliancy of fine finishing.

On the 20th of June, 1763, West arrived in London. Allen, Hamilton, and Smith, his early and steadfast friends, happened to be there. They welcomed him with open

arms, and introduced him to many officers of note who had heard of him in Pennsylvania. At this time he had no intention of remaining in England, nor of practising his profession for the time that he stayed. He visited the collections of Hampton Court, Windsor, and Blenheim; resided some time at Reading with Thomas West, the half-brother of his father, and looked at the vanities of Bath in the middle of its season. By degrees he began to love the land and the people. He was introduced to Reynolds, and a letter from Mengs made him acquainted with Wilson. Intercourse with artists, and an examination of their works, awakened his ambition. He consulted no one, but took chambers in Bedford Street, Covent Garden, and set up his easel. When his determination was known, his brethren in art came round him in a body, welcomed him with much cordiality, and encouraged him to continue his career as an historical painter. Reynolds was devoted to portraits; Hogarth on the brink of the grave; Barry engaged in controversies in Rome;[1] Wilson neglected; Gainsborough's excellence lay in landscape; and the prudent American saw that he had a fair field and no opponents.[2]

As soon, therefore, as he had finished his "Angelica and Medora," he sent it, by the advice of Reynolds, to the exhibition, together with the "Cimon and Iphigenia," and a portrait of General Monckton, second in command to Wolfe in the battle of Quebec. While he was employed in finishing those works, he had the good fortune to be introduced to Dr. Johnson and Mr. Burke. Johnson he admired much, and found civil and even kind. Burke also

[1] Barry did not leave England until 1765.—Ed.

[2] The sagacious Walpole does not seem to have been one of those who believed in the gifted young American. He speaks of him in 1764 as a "Pensilvanian, lately arrived, whose pictures are much admired, but are very tawdry, in the manner of Baroccio." Burke, however, writing to Barry, in 1756, says: "West has two pieces which would give you great hopes of him. I confess, some time ago I had not any that were very sanguine; but in these he has really done considerable things." The works exhibited by West this year were "The Continence of Scipio," "Pylades and Orestes," its companion "Cimon and Iphigenia," "Diana and Endymion," and "Two Young Ladies at Play."—Ed.

was indulgent; but our artist conceived there was an air of mystery about his demeanour. West at once recognized him as the brother of the chief of the Benedictine Monks at Parma.

The works which West exhibited were well received; the conception was good, and the colouring clear; and his love of serious and solemn subjects attracted the special notice of some of the dignitaries of the church. He painted, for Dr. Newton, the "Parting of Hector and Andromache," and, for the Bishop of Worcester, the "Return of the Prodigal Son." His reputation rose so much with these productions, that Lord Rockingham tempted him with the offer of a permanent engagement, and a salary of seven hundred pounds a year, to embellish with historical paintings his mansion in Yorkshire. West consulted his friends concerning this alluring offer—they were sensible men. They advised him to confide in the *public*, and he followed for a time their salutary counsel.

This successful beginning, and the promise of full employment, induced him to resolve on remaining in the Old Country. But he was attached to Elizabeth Shewell, a young lady of his native land—absence had augmented his regard, and he wished to return to Philadelphia, marry her, and bring her to England. He disclosed the state of his affections to his friends, Smith and Allen. Those gentlemen took a less romantic view of the matter; advised the artist to stick to his easel, and arranged the whole so prudently that the lady came to London accompanied by a relation, whose time was not so valuable as West's; and they were married on the 2nd of September, 1765, in the church of St. Martin's-in-the-Fields. As he was a man without violent passions, and something cold and considerate, he made, perhaps, but an indifferent figure as a lover; his wife, however, was kind and obedient, and their fireside had repose and peace.

Dr. Drummond, the Archbishop of York, a dignified and liberal prelate, and an admirer of painting, invited West to his table, conversed with him on the influence of art, and on the honour which the patronage of genius re-

flected on the rich, and opening Tacitus, pointed out that fine passage where Agrippina lands with the ashes of Germanicus. He caused his son to read it again and again, commented upon it with taste and feeling, and requested West to make him a painting of that subject. The artist went home; it was then late, but before closing his eyes he formed a sketch, and carried it early next morning to his patron, who, glad to see that his own notions were likely to be embodied in lasting colours, requested that the full size work might be proceeded with. Nor was this all—that munificent prelate proposed to raise three thousand pounds by subscription, to enable West to relinquish likenesses and give his whole time and talent to historical painting. Fifteen hundred pounds were accordingly subscribed by himself and his friends; but the public refused to co-operate, and the scheme was abandoned.

The Archbishop regarded the failure of this plan as a stigma on the country; his self-love too was offended. He disregarded alike the coldness of the Duke of Portland and the evasions of Lord Rockingham, to whom he communicated his scheme—sought and obtained an audience of his Majesty, then young and unacquainted with cares—informed him that a devout American and Quaker had painted, at his request, such a noble picture that he was desirous to secure his talents for the throne and the country. The King was much interested with the story, and said, "Let me see this young painter of your's with his 'Agrippina' as soon as you please." The prelate retired to communicate his success to West.

Now all this happened to be overheard by one of those officious ladies who love to untie the knots of mysteries, and anticipate the natural disclosure of all secrets. Away flew her ladyship to the house of the artist—refused to disclose either her name or condition, acquainted him with the application of Drummond and the kindness of the King, and retired. She was not well away when a gentleman came from the palace to request West's attendance with the picture of "Agrippina." "His Majesty," said the messenger, "is a young man of great simplicity and candour;

sedate in his affections, scrupulous in forming private friendships, good from principle, and pure from a sense of the beauty of virtue." Forty years' intercourse, we might almost say friendship, confirmed to the painter the accuracy of these words.

The King received West with easy frankness, assisted him to place the "Agrippina" in a favourable light, removed the attendants, and brought in the Queen, to whom he presented our Quaker. He related to her Majesty the history of the picture, and bade her notice the simplicity of the design and the beauty of the colouring. "There is another noble Roman subject," observed his Majesty, "the departure of Regulus from Rome—would it not make a fine picture?" "It is a magnificent subject," said the painter. "Then," said the King, "you shall paint it for me." He turned with a smile to the Queen, and said, "The Archbishop made one of his sons read Tacitus to Mr. West, and I would have read Livy to him myself—but that part of the history which describes the departure of Regulus is unfortunately lost." He then repeated his command that the picture should be painted.

West was too prudent not to wish to retain the Sovereign's good opinion—and his modesty and his merit deserved it. The palace doors now seemed to open of their own accord, and the domestics attended with an obedient start to the wishes of him whom the King delighted to honour. There are minor matters which sometimes help a man on to fame; and in these too he had a share; West was a skilful skater, and in America had formed an acquaintance on the ice with Colonel—afterwards too well known in the colonial war as General Howe: this friendship had dissolved with the thaw, and was forgotten till one day the painter having tied on his skates at the Serpentine, was astonishing the timid practitioners of London by the rapidity of his motions, and the graceful figure which he cut. Some one cried "West! West!" it was Colonel Howe. "I am glad to see you," said he, "and not the less so that you come in good time to vindicate my praises of American skating." He called to him Lord Spencer Hamilton and some of the Cavendishes, to whom he introduced West as one of the

Philadelphia prodigies, and requested him to show them what was called "The Salute." He performed this feat so much to their satisfaction, that they went away spreading the praises of the American skater over London. Nor was the considerate Quaker insensible to the value of such commendations; he continued to frequent the Serpentine and to gratify large crowds by cutting the Philadelphia Salute. Many to the praise of his skating added panegyrics on his professional skill, and not a few, to vindicate their applause, followed him to his easel, and sat for their portraits.

While West was painting the "Departure of Regulus," the present Royal Academy was planned. The Society of Incorporated Artists, of which he was a member, had grown rich by yearly exhibitions, and how to lay out this money became the subject of vehement debate. The Architects were for a house, the Sculptors for statues, and the Painters proposed a large gallery for historical works, while a mean and sordid member or two voted to let it lie and grow more, for it was pleasant to see riches accumulate. West, who happened to be a director, approved of none of these notions, and with Reynolds withdrew from the association. The newspapers of the day noticed these indecent bickerings, and the King, learning the cause from the lips of West, declared that he was ready to patronize any association formed on principles calculated to advance the interests of art. A plan was produced by some of the dissenters, and submitted to his Majesty, who corrected it, and drew up some additional articles, with his own hand.

Meanwhile the Incorporated Artists continued their debates, in total ignorance that their dissenting brethren were laying the foundation of a surer structure than their own. Kirby, teacher of perspective to the King, had been chosen president: but so secretly was all managed, that he had never heard a whisper in the palace concerning the new academy, and in his inaugural address from the chair, he assured his companions that his Majesty would not countenance the Schismatics. While West was one day busy with his "Regulus," the King and Queen

looking on, Kirby was announced, and his Majesty having consulted his consort in German, admitted him, and introduced him to West, to whose person he was a stranger. He looked at the picture, praised it warmly, and congratulated the artist; then, turning to the King, said, "Your Majesty never mentioned anything of this work to me—who made the frame?—it is not made by one of your Majesty's workmen—it ought to have been made by the royal carver and gilder." To this impertinence the King answered with great calmness, "Kirby, whenever you are able to paint me such a picture as this, your friend shall make the frame." "I hope, Mr. West," said Kirby, "that you intend to exhibit this picture?" "It is painted for the palace," said West, "and its exhibition must depend upon his Majesty's pleasure." "Assuredly," said the King, "I shall be very happy to let the work be shown to the public." "Then, Mr. West," said Kirby, "you will send it to my exhibition." "No!" interrupted his Majesty, "it must go to *my* exhibition—to that of the Royal Academy." The President of the Associated Artists bowed with much humility and retired. He did not long survive this mortification, and his death was imputed, by the founders of the new Academy, to jealousy of their rising establishment, but by those who knew him well to a more ordinary cause, the decay of nature. The Royal Academy was founded, and in its first exhibition appeared the "Regulus."[1]

A change was now to be effected in the character of

[1] The Society of Incorporated Artists, formed chiefly of the artists who had studied in Shipley's school, obtained their charter in 1765. Their annual exhibition met with unexpected success; but their aims were as yet undefined, and hopeless mismanagement brought discredit on the whole endeavour, and caused all the leading artists who refused to allow themselves to be governed by a majority of incapables to withdraw from the association. A pamphlet published in 1771, "On the Conduct of the Royal Academicians while Members of the Incorporated Society of Artists," gives the whole history of this schism, and of the circumstances which gave rise to the foundation of the present Royal Academy in 1768. A long account will also be found in Redgrave's "Century of Painters." Allan Cunningham's graphic relation requires to be received with some modifications, though, on the whole, it is substantially correct. West was one of the first members of the Royal Academy, but was not the originator of the scheme.—Ed.

British art; hitherto historical painting had appeared in a masquing habit: the actions of Englishmen seemed all to have been performed, if costume were to be believed, by Greeks or by Romans. West dismissed at once this pedantry, and restored nature and propriety in his noble work of "The Death of Wolfe." The multitude acknowledged its excellence at once. The lovers of old art, the manufacturers of compositions called by courtesy classical, complained of the barbarism of boots, and buttons, and blunderbusses, and cried out for naked warriors with bows, bucklers, and battering rams. Lord Grosvenor, disregarding the frowns of the amateurs, and the cold approbation of the Academy, purchased this work, which, in spite of laced coats and cocked hats, is one of the best of our historical pictures. The Indian warrior, watching the dying hero to see if he equalled in fortitude the children of the deserts, is a fine stroke of nature and poetry.[1]

The King questioned West concerning the picture, and put him on his defence of this new heresy in art. To the curiosity of Galt we owe the sensible answer of West. "When it was understood," said the artist, "that I intended to paint the characters as they had actually appeared on the scene, the Archbishop of York called on Reynolds, and asked his opinion; they both came to my house to dissuade me from running so great a risk. Reynolds began a very ingenious and elegant dissertation on the state of the public taste in this country, and the danger which every innovation incurred of contempt and ridicule, and concluded by urging me earnestly to adopt the costume of antiquity, as more becoming the greatness of my subject than the modern garb of European warriors. I answered that the event to be commemorated happened in the year 1758, in a region of the world unknown to the Greeks and Romans, and at a period of time when no warriors who wore such costume existed. The subject I have to represent is a great battle fought and won, and the same truth which gives law to the historian should rule the painter. If

[1] This picture is still in the possession of the Marquis of Westminster. There is a duplicate of it at Hampton Court. It is undoubtedly West's most successful work.—Ed.

instead of the facts of the action I introduce fictions, how shall I be understood by posterity? The classic dress is certainly picturesque, but by using it I shall lose in sentiment what I gain in external grace. I want to mark the place, the time and the people, and to do this I must abide by truth. They went away then, and returned again when I had the painting finished. Reynolds seated himself before the picture, examined it with deep and minute attention for half an hour; then rising, said to Drummond, 'West has conquered—he has treated his subject as it ought to be treated—I retract my objections. I foresee that this picture will not only become one of the most popular, but will occasion a revolution in art.' 'I wish,' said the King, 'that I had known all this before, for the objection has been the means of Lord Grosvenor's getting the picture, but you shall make a copy for me.'"

West had now obtained the personal confidence of the King and the favour of the public; his commissions were numerous, but of course the works for the palace had precedence. His Majesty employed him to paint the "Death of Epaminondas," as a companion to that of Wolfe; the "Death of the Chevalier Bayard;" "Cyrus Liberating the Family of the King of Armenia;" and "Segestus and his Daughter brought before Germanicus." The air of the palace had some influence on the mind of the prudent Quaker.[1] The great Leibnitz had pointed out the descendants of Segestus in our own royal line, and West communicated a little of the lineaments of the living to the images of the dead. The good King was much pleased with the work.

It is said that Sir Joshua Reynolds now began to observe West's favour somewhat resentfully, thinking that a ray or two of the royal sunshine might in fairness have fallen upon himself. The President was not fool enough to complain, but his friends did so for him; while West,

[1] Allan Cunningham always speaks of West as a Quaker; but other writers affirm that he gave up his Quaker dress and mode of speech soon after his arrival in England. In his later years Dunlop, an American gentleman who knew him well, says of him that "he was as unquaker-like as any man in Great Britain."—Ed.

too prudent to carry himself loftily because of his good fortune, enjoyed his success in secret, and continued in the outward man submissive and thankful. To Reynolds had fallen the whole portrait department of church and state, which lay without the gates of the palace; while, within, West reigned triumphant. Thus they divided the British world of art between them, while Barry and Wilson, by toiling without distinction, were earning precarious bread.

West was not a man to remain insensible to the advantage of having a young, amiable, and patriotic sovereign for his patron. The painter expressed his regret that the Italians had dipped their pencils in the monkish miracles and incredible legends of the church, to the almost total neglect of their national history: the King instantly bethought him of the victorious reign of our third Edward, and of St. George's Hall in Windsor Castle. West had a ready hand. He sketched out the following subjects, seven of which are from real, and one from fabulous history:—

1. "Edward the Third embracing the Black Prince, after the Battle of Cressy." 2. "The Installation of the Order of the Garter." 3. "The Black Prince receiving the King of France and his son prisoners, at Poictiers." 4. "St. George vanquishing the Dragon." 5. "Queen Phillipa defeating David of Scotland, in the Battle of Neville's Cross." 6. "Queen Phillipa interceding with Edward for the Burgesses of Calais." 7. "King Edward forcing the Passage of the Somme." 8. "King Edward crowning Sir Eustace de Ribaumont at Calais." These works are very large. They were the fruit of long study and much labour, and with the exception of the "Death of Wolfe" and the "Battle of La Hogue," they are the best of all the numerous works of this artist. Their lustre is fresh and unfaded, their colouring natural and harmonious. They present a lively image of the times and the people; but they are deficient in strength and variety of character —they seize attention, but are unable to detain it.

West, however, had the good fortune to maintain his influence at Windsor. When the King grew weary of courts and camps and battles, the observing artist took

new ground, and appealed to the religious feelings of his royal patron. He suggested to the King a series of pictures on the progress of revealed religion.[1] A splendid Oratory was projected for their reception, and half a dozen dignitaries of the church were summoned to consider the propriety of introducing paintings into a place of worship. "When I reflect," said the King, "that the Reformation condemned religious paintings in churches, and that the Parliament in the unhappy days of Charles I. did the same, I am fearful of introducing anything which my people might think popish. Will you give me your opinions on the subject?" After some deliberation Bishop Hurd delivered, in the name of his brethren and himself, their unanimous opinion, that the introduction of religious paintings into *his Majesty's Chapel* would in no respect whatever violate the laws or the usages of the Church of England. "We have examined too," continued Hurd, "thirty-five subjects which the painter proposed for our choice, and we feel that there is not one of them but may be treated in a way, that even a Quaker might contemplate with edification." The King conceived this to be an ironical allusion to West, and was a little nettled. "The Quakers," he replied, "are a body of Christians for whom I have a high respect. I love their peaceful tenets and their benevolence to one another, and, but for the obligations of birth, I would be a Quaker." The Bishop bowed submissively and retired.

No subtle divine ever laboured more diligently on controversial texts than did our painter in evolving his pictures out of the grand and awful subject of revealed religion. He divided it into Four Dispensations—the Antediluvian, the Patriarchal, the Mosaical, and the Prophetical. They contained in all thirty-six subjects, eighteen of which belonged to the Old Testament, the rest to the New. They were all sketched, and twenty-eight were executed, for which West received in all twenty-one thousand seven hundred and five pounds. A work so

[1] According to Galt this vast project was the King's own suggestion. Galt gives in detail all the conversation that took place in the palace on this subject, after the manner of Livy.—ED.

varied, so extensive, and so noble in its nature, was never before undertaken by any painter.[1] But the imagination of West was unable to cope with such glorious themes—the soft, the graceful, and the domestic, were more suited to his talents. Several of the subjects too were necessarily the same as those painted by the great masters—the "Last Supper," the "Crucifixion," and the "Annunciation" had been over and over again handled by artists higher in mental stature than West; and in the competition he had nothing to hope and everything to fear. He was daring in his undertakings—not so in his genius.

During the progress of these works he painted many pictures of lesser importance. The King, the Queen, the young princes and princesses sat for their portraits, sometimes singly and sometimes in groups—forming in all nine pictures, for which West received two thousand guineas—a royal price, when we consider the charges of Reynolds and Gainsborough at this time. They are well conceived and prettily drawn, but want soul and substance, and seem the shadows of what is noble and lovely. There is no deception—they are flat, and the eye seems to see through both colour and canvas: but time and frail materials may be mainly blamable for this.

The war which broke out between Britain and her colonies was a sore trial to the feelings of West; his early friends and his present patrons were involved in the bloody controversy.[2] He was not, according to his own account, silent; he was too much in the palace and alone with his Majesty to avoid some allusion to the strife; the King inquired anxiously respecting the resources of his foes and the talents of their chiefs, and the artist gave, or

[1] Allan Cunningham forgets the Sistine Chapel. West really seems to have laboured under the delusion that he would prove a rival to Michelangelo.—Ed.

[2] Rush, in his "Court of London, 1819 to 1825," relates that once, on the news of a victory over the Americans being brought while West was at the palace, the King asked him why he was silent and did not rejoice with the others. West replied: "I hope your Majesty will not take it amiss if I cannot feel pleasure in hearing of misfortunes to those amongst whom I was born and passed my early days." "Right, right, West," said the King, "I honour you for it."—Ed.

imagined he gave, more correct information concerning the American leaders and their objects than could be acquired through official channels. West had been long away from his native land. His literary talents were not of an order to allure correspondents,[1] and with few, if any, of the influential insurgents can it be supposed that he was at all acquainted. But not few were the delusions under which this amiable man lived. How he contrived both to keep his place in the King's opinion, and the respect of the spirits who stirred in the American revolution, he has not told us, but it is not difficult to guess. He was of a nature cold and unimpassioned; his religion taught him peace, his situation whispered prudence, and the artist dismissed civil broils from his mind, and addressed himself to more profitable contemplations. He saw his reward in fortune, and perhaps in fame, for those days of toil and nights of study, in which he painted and pored over history, sacred and profane, and he closed his eyes on all else save elaborate outlines and the effect of light and shade.

He was now moving in the first circles, and the word of West was the courtly sanction in matters of taste. His various and extensive works left little leisure for the acquisition of extra-professional knowledge, and he probably thought that excellence in art was enough. By dining with divines he had learned to skim the surface of religious knowledge, and his professional and general society gave him hints as to what was passing in the world of literature and fashion. He made the little that he did know go far; and found means to pass with men of some discernment as a silent person of fair education, who did not wish to throw any wisdom away. The royal favour was much; and he had besides a certain quiet air of natural dignity in his manner.

The death of Reynolds vacated the President's chair, and no one then living was more worthy to fill it than Mr. West. The fierce temper of Barry left him no chance of the honour which his genius merited. To the choice of the Academy the King gave his ready sanction, and West

[1] He could not write the shortest note without mistakes both in grammar and spelling.—Ed.

took his place on the 24th of March, 1792, and delivered his inaugural address to an audience who much applauded a composition which could have cost him little thought, since it dwelt but on two topics—the excellence of British art, and the gracious benevolence of his Majesty.

The new President delivered many discourses, all more or less distinguished for plain practical sense. He pressed upon the students the value of knowledge and the necessity of study, and the uselessness of both without a corresponding aptitude of mind and buoyancy of imagination—in other words, genius. He advised them to give heart and soul wholly to art, to turn aside neither to the right nor to the left, but consider that hour lost in which a line had not been drawn, nor a masterpiece studied. "Observe," he said, "with the same contemplative eye the landscape, the appearance of trees, figures dispersed around, and their aerial distance as well as lineal forms. Omit not to observe the light and shade in consequence of the sun's rays being intercepted by clouds or other accidents. Let your mind be familiar with the characteristics of the ocean; mark its calm dignity when undisturbed by the winds, and all its various states between that and its terrible sublimity when agitated by the tempest. Sketch with attention its foaming and winding coasts, and that awful line which separates it from the heavens. Replenished with these stores, your imagination will then come forth as a river collected from little springs spreads into might and majesty. If you aspire to excellence in your profession, you must, like the industrious bee, survey the whole face of nature and sip the sweet from every flower. When thus enriched, lay up your acquisitions for future use, and examine the great works of art to animate your feelings and to excite your emulation. When you are thus mentally enriched, and your hand practised to obey the powers of your will, you will then find your pencils or your chisels as magic wands, calling into view creations of your own to adorn your name and country." [1]

[1] Very fine advice this, but scarcely distinguished for the "plain practical sense" that Allan Cunningham commends. Any one of Reynolds's Discourses contains more useful observation than all West's.—Ed.

In this way he laboured to stimulate his youthful audience; but to awaken indifference into energy—to add wings to those whose imaginations were fit for flight, and fuel to the fire of genius, required higher powers. He had no unstudied felicities of phrase, little vigour of thought, or happiness of illustration—he was cold, sensible, and instructive; and the student who may learn from his pictures the way to manage a difficult subject, and from his life the art of employing his time, can hardly be expected to re-read his discourses.

So regular were West's hours of labour, and so carefully did he calculate his time, that to describe one day of his life is to describe years. He rose early—studied before breakfast—began to work on one of his large pictures about ten—painted with little intermission till four—washed, dressed, and saw visitors, and having dined, recommenced his studies anew. His works were chiefly historical; he dealt with the dead; and the solitude of his gallery was seldom invaded by the rich or the great, clamouring for their portraits. Visitors sometimes found their way to his inner study while he had the pencil in his hand; he had no wish to show off his skill to the idle, and generally sat as silent and motionless on such occasions as one of his own Apostles. His words were few, his manner easy; his quakerlike sobriety seemed little elevated by intercourse with nobles and waiting-gentlewomen. On the Windsor pictures he expended much study, and to render them worthy of their place, he "trimmed," as he told the King, "his midnight lamp." So closely was he imprisoned by their composition, that his attendance at the burial of so eminent a brother as Gainsborough was mentioned as something extraordinary.

It must not be supposed that he enjoyed without envy the threefold blessing of magnificent subjects, high prices, and kingly favour. Barry was famishing, and his complaints were loud and eloquent. Fuseli, with all his wit, learning, and imagination, could barely live; and Opie had been taught the severe, though common lesson, that nothing is so unstable as the patronage of the powerful. The very calmness and moderation with which the King's

historical painter carried himself was something provoking. He went from his gallery in Newman Street to Windsor, and back again, with the staid looks of one of the brethren going to, and returning from, chapel. Of his importance at Court, however, he was willing enough to speak, though in a mild and meek way; and as to high matters in general he affected somewhat of the vague diplomatic language of official men: West had probably no state secrets to conceal—if he had, his conversation kept them a mystery.

When he succeeded to the President's chair, the King wished to confer upon him the distinction of knighthood. To lay the royal sword on the shoulder of a Quaker was something new, and the curiosity of the courtiers was excited. The Duke of Gloucester called on West from the King, to inquire if this honour would be acceptable. "No man," said Benjamin, "entertains a higher respect for political honours and distinctions than myself, but I really think I have earned greater eminence by my pencil already than knighthood could confer on me. The chief value of titles is to preserve in families a respect for those principles by which such distinctions were originally obtained—but simple knighthood to a man who is at least as well known as he could ever hope to be from that honour, is not a legitimate object of ambition. To myself then your Royal Highness must perceive the title could add no dignity, and as it would perish with myself, it could add none to my family. But were I possessed of fortune, independent of my profession, sufficient to enable my posterity to maintain the rank, I think that, with my hereditary descent, and the station I occupy among artists, a more permanent title might become a desirable object. As it is, however, that cannot be; and I have been thus explicit with your Royal Highness that no misconception may exist on the subject." The Duke took West by the hand, and said, "You have justified the opinion which the King has of you; he will be delighted with your answer."

In that answer there was certainly very little of the Quaker. Possibly he was not without hope that the King

would confer a baronetcy, and an income to support it, on one who, to descent from the Lords of Delaware, could add such claims of personal importance. No farther notice, however, was taken of the matter; he went to the palace as usual, and as usual his reception was warm and friendly.

From 1769 till 1801 West had uniformly received all orders for pictures from his Majesty in person. They had settled the subject and price between them without the intervention of others, and, in addition to his one thousand pounds a-year paid on account, he had received whatever more, and it was not much, might be due upon the pictures actually painted. A great change was near. A mental cloud fell upon the King, and the artist was the first to be made sensible that the sceptre was departed from his hand. The doors of the palace, which heretofore had opened spontaneously like those of Milton's "Paradise," no longer flew wide at his approach, but turned on their hinges grating and reluctantly. What this might mean he was informed by Mr. Wyatt, the royal architect, who called and said, he was authorized to inform him that the pictures painting for the Chapel at Windsor must be suspended till further orders. "This extraordinary proceeding" (says Galt) "rendered the studies of the best part of the artist's life useless, and deprived him of that honourable provision, the fruit of his talents and industry, on which he had counted for the repose of his declining years. For some time it affected him deeply, and he was at a loss what steps to take. At last, however, on reflecting on the marked friendship and favour which the King had always shown him, he addressed to his Majesty a letter, of which the following is a copy of the rough draught, being the only one preserved." After mentioning the message to suspend the paintings for the Chapel, it proceeds:—

"Since 1797 I have finished three pictures, begun several others, and composed the remainder of the subjects for the Chapel, on the progress of Revealed Religion. Those are subjects so replete with dignity of character and expression, as demanded the historian, the commentator, and the accomplished painter to bring them into view. Your

Majesty's gracious commands for my pencil on that extensive subject stimulated my humble abilities, and I commenced the work with zeal and enthusiasm. Animated by your commands, I burnt my midnight lamp to attain that polish which marks my scriptural pictures. Your Majesty's zeal for religion and love of the elegant arts are known over the civilized world, and your protection of my pencil had given it celebrity, and made mankind anxiously look for the completion of the great work on Revealed Religion. In the station which I fill in the Academy I have been zealous in promoting merit; ingenious artists have received my ready aid, and my galleries and my purse have been opened to their studies and their distresses. The breath of envy or the whisper of detraction never defiled my lips, nor the want of morality my character; and your Majesty's virtues and those of her Majesty, have been the theme of my admiration for many years.

"I feel with great concern the suspension of the work on Revealed Religion—if it is meant to be permanent, myself and the fine arts have much to lament. To me it will be ruinous, and it will damp the hope of patronage in the more refined departments of painting. I have this consolation, that in the thirty-five years during which my pencil has been honoured with your commands, a great body of historical and scriptural works have been placed in the churches and palaces of the kingdom. Their professional claims may be humble, but similar works have not been executed before by any of your Majesty's subjects. And this I will assert, that your commands and patronage were not laid on a lazy or an ungrateful man, or an undutiful subject."

To this letter, written on the 26th of September, 1801, and carried to the court by Wyatt, West received no answer. On his Majesty's recovery, he sought and obtained a private audience. The King had not been made acquainted with the order for suspending the works, nor had he received the letter. "Go on with your work, West," said the King kindly, "go on with the pictures, and I will take care of you." He shook him by the hand, and dismissed him. "And this," says Galt, "was the last interview he

was permitted to have with his early and constant, and to him truly royal, patron. But he continued to execute the pictures, and in the usual quarterly payments received his £1,000 per annum till his Majesty's final superannuation; when, without any intimation whatever, on calling to receive it, he was told it had been stopped, and that the paintings for the Chapel, of Revealed Religion, had been suspended. He submitted in silence—he neither remonstrated nor complained." [1]

The story of his dismissal from court was spread abroad with many aggravations; and the malevolence of enemies which his success had created—there are always such reptiles—was gratified by the circulation of papers detailing an account of the prices which the fortunate painter had received for his works from the King. The hand which had drawn up this injurious document neglected to state that the sum of thirty-four thousand one hundred and eighty-seven pounds was earned in the course of thirty-three laborious years: and the public, looking only to the sum at the bottom of the page, imagined that West must have amassed a fortune. This notion was dispelled by an accurate statement of work done and money received, with day and date, signed with the artist's name, and accompanied by a formal declaration of its truth; a needless addition, for all who knew anything of West, knew him to be one of the most honourable of men.

Whilst suffering under the neglect of the court, the peace of Amiens opened the Continent, and thither West went, to

[1] There does seem to have been some amount of hardship in the treatment West received, though it could scarcely be expected that these munificent commissions of an imbecile king would be continued.

It is to West's credit that just at the time of the stoppage of his pension from the King, when, for some reason, he seems really to have been in want of money himself, he sent poor struggling Haydon £15 to keep the wolf from the door for a few more days. He had been to see his "Judgment of Solomon," and had been "moved to tears by it," according to Haydon. West was also very kind to young Proctor, a sculptor of much promise, whose history is one of the saddest among those of baffled aspirants to fame. Altogether, indeed, he seems to have been a kind-hearted man, though prudent in his generosity and cold in his manner. Not loveable like Reynolds, of whom Dr. Johnson said, "I never knew a man whom I would more willingly call my friend."—ED.

see with his own eyes the splendid works of the pencil and chisel which Buonaparte had assembled in the Louvre. The President of the British Academy was not to be overlooked by the wily politicians who surrounded the future Emperor. Minister after minister, and artist after artist, from the accomplished Talleyrand and the subtle Fouché to the enthusiastic Dénon and the ferocious David, gathered around him, and talked, with unbounded love, of historical painting and of its influence on mankind. In a series of entertainments in which wine and flattery were poured out abundantly, the enemies of his country succeeded in persuading the simple Benjamin that they were the most philanthropic of all nations, and their master the kindest and worthiest of men.

Filled with these fine notions, West one day came up to Mr. Fox and Sir Francis Baring, as they were strolling about the Louvre, and harangued them on the sublime and benevolent views of Napoleon, who only conquered kingdoms out of love for liberty, and collected pictures in the towns which he stormed "to furnish models of study for artists of all nations." He concluded by pointing out the propriety, even in a mercantile point of view, of encouraging to a sevenfold extent the higher departments of art in England. The prospect of commercial advantages pleased Baring, and Fox said with much frankness, and with that sincerity which lasts at least for the moment, "I have been rocked in the cradle of politics, and never before was so much struck with the advantages, even in a political bearing, of the Fine Arts, to the prosperity as well as to the renown of a kingdom; and I do assure you, Mr. West, if ever I have it in my power to influence our government to promote the Arts, the conversation which we have had to-day shall not be forgotten." They parted, and West returned to England.

Old age was now coming on him; but his grey hairs were denied the repose which a life of virtue and labour deserved. He took it into his head that he was looked upon coldly by the government for his admiration of Buonaparte; and assailed in the Academy by an opposition strong in numbers and in eloquence, in which Shee distinguished himself, he

was induced to retire from the President's chair, and Wyatt was elected in his stead. This distinction the court architect had merited by no works which could be weighed in the balance with the worst of his predecessor's; and West persuaded himself that his own splendid reception in France had been the root of all the evil. He certainly had a very lofty notion of himself, and his account of the stir which he excited in Paris, marks a mind amiably but extravagantly vain. "Wherever I went," he said, "men looked at me, and ministers and people of influence in the state were constantly in my company. I was one day in the Louvre—all eyes were upon me; and I could not help observing to Charles Fox, *who happened to be walking with me*, how strong was the love of art, and admiration of its professors, in France." This trait of simplicity will never be surpassed.

In a short time, however, the Academy became weary of Wyatt, displaced him, and restored the painter, by a vote which may be called unanimous; since there was only one dissenting member—supposed to be Fuseli—who put in the name of Mrs. Moser for President. Ladies were at that period permitted to be members, and the jester no doubt meant to insinuate that a shrewd old woman was a fit rival for West.[1]

The restored President now endeavoured to form a national association for the encouragement of works of dignity and importance, and was cheered with the assurance of ministerial if not royal patronage. But many of those who countenanced the design were cautious and timid men, deficient in that lofty enthusiasm necessary for success in grand undertakings, and whose souls were not large enough to conceive and consummate a plan worthy of the rank and genius of a nation. The times, too, were unfavourable: Englishmen had in those days need enough to think of other matters than paintings and statues. Mr. Pitt, who had really seemed disposed to lend his aid to this new association, soon died. Mr. Fox, who succeeded him, declared,

[1] The story is usually told as relating to Mrs. Lloyd. Fuseli is reported to have said, when taxed with giving the vote, "Well, suppose I did. Is not one old woman as good as another?"—Ed.

"As soon as I am firmly seated in the saddle, I shall redeem the promise I made in the Louvre"—but he also was soon lost to his country. The pistol of an assassin prevented Perceval from taking into consideration a third memorial which West had drawn up, and the President at last relinquished the project in despair.[1]

West was now sixty-four years old—a life blameless and temperate had kept his strength unimpaired, and he had still the same composed and determined mind by which he was distinguished in his youth. He had also unbounded confidence in his own powers, and since the illness of his royal friend had closed the doors of the palace against him, he resolved to try once more his fortune with the public. He according commenced painting a series of Scriptural subjects upon a large scale: and the first which appeared was that of "Christ healing the Sick." The history of this picture deserves to be told. The Quakers of Philadelphia requested West to aid them in erecting an hospital for the sick in his native town—he told them his circumstances scarcely admitted of his being generous, but he would aid them after his own way, and paint them a picture if they would provide a place to receive it in their new building. They were pleased with this, and "Christ healing the Sick" was painted for Philadelphia. When exhibited in London, the crush to see it was very great—the praise it obtained was high—and the British Institution offered him three thousand guineas for the work.[2] West accepted the offer, for he was far from being rich,—but on condition that he should be allowed to make a copy, with alterations, for his native place. He did so; and when the copy went to America, the profits arising from its exhibition enabled the committee of the hospital to enlarge the building and receive more patients.

The success of this piece impressed West with the be-

[1] The British Institution was afterwards formed out of the wreck of West's magnificent plan.—Ed.

[2] Eighteen hundred guineas were likewise paid to Charles Heath for engraving this admired work. It now hangs in the National Gallery, having been presented by the Directors of the British Institution, in 1826.—Ed.

lief that his genius appeared to most advantage in pictures of large dimensions, and that royal commissions had hitherto interposed between him and fortune. His mind, from long contemplation, was familiar with subjects of gigantic proportions; and he had soon sketched out several, and finished some. But the little snug and comfortable houses of England could not contain this colossal progeny; the doors of our churches are generally opened to art with reluctance—our palaces had already admitted more of the President's works than, perhaps, were welcome; and the owners of our galleries were unwilling to make room for such enormous pieces on Scripture subjects. There was no market for the manufacture. Few were tempted to become purchasers, though many were edified with the "Descent of the Holy Ghost on Christ at the Jordan," ten feet by fourteen—"The Crucifixion," sixteen feet by twenty-eight—"The Ascension," twelve feet by eighteen—and "The Inspiration of St. Peter," of corresponding extent. As old age benumbed his faculties, and began to freeze up the well-spring of original thought, the daring intrepidity of the man seemed but to grow and augment. Immense pictures, embracing topics which would have alarmed loftier spirits, came crowding thick upon his fancy, and he was the only person who appeared insensible that such were too weighty for his handling.

Domestic sorrow mingled with professional disappointment. Elizabeth Shewell—for more than fifty years his kind and tender companion—died on the 6th of December, 1817, and West, seventy-nine years old, felt that he was soon to follow. His wife and he had loved each other some sixty years—had seen their children's children—and the world had no compensation to offer. He began to sink, and though still to be found at his easel, his hand had lost its early alacrity. It was evident that all this was to cease soon; that he was suffering a slow, and a general, and easy decay. The venerable old man sat in his study among his favourite pictures, a breathing image of piety and contentment, awaiting calmly the hour of his dissolution. Without any fixed complaint, his mental faculties unimpaired, his cheerfulness uneclipsed, and with

looks serene and benevolent, he expired 11th March, 1820, in the eighty-second year of his age. He was buried beside Reynolds, Opie, and Barry, in St. Paul's Cathedral. The pall was borne by noblemen, ambassadors, and academicians; his two sons and grandson were chief mourners; and sixty coaches brought up the splendid procession.

Benjamin West was in person above the middle size, of a fair complexion, and firmly and compactly built. His serene brow betokened command of temper, whilst his eyes, sparkling and vivacious, promised lively remarks and pointed sayings, in which he by no means abounded. Intercourse with courts and with the world, which changes so many, made no change in his sedate sobriety of sentiment and happy propriety of manner, the results of a devout domestic education. His kindness to young artists was great—his liberality seriously impaired his income—he never seemed weary of giving advice—intrusion never disturbed his temper—nor could the tediousness of the dull ever render him either impatient or peevish. He was indeed friendly to all—and particularly kind to two artists who have since risen to high distinction—Chantrey and Martin. For the former he obtained the statue of Washington, erected at Boston; and to the latter he willingly disclosed the secrets of his profession, and cheered him by his approbation. Whatever he knew in art he readily imparted—he was always happy to think that art was advancing, and no mean jealousy of other men's good fortune ever invaded his repose. His vanity was amusing and amiable—and his belief—prominent in every page of the narrative which he dictated to his friend Mr. Galt—that preaching and prophecy had predestined him to play a great part before mankind, and be an example to all posterity, did no one any harm, and himself some good.

As his life was long and laborious, his productions are very numerous. He painted and sketched in oil upwards of four hundred pictures, mostly of an historical and religious nature,[1] and he left more than two hundred original drawings in his portfolio. His works were supposed by

[1] One of these immense canvases painted by West may occasionally

himself, and for a time by others, to be in the true spirit of the great masters, and he composed them with the serious ambition and hope of illustrating Scripture and rendering Gospel truth more impressive. No subject seemed to him too lofty for his pencil; he considered himself worthy to follow the sublimest flights of the prophets, and dared to limn the effulgence of God's glory and the terrors of the Day of Judgment. The mere list of his works makes us shudder at human presumption—Moses receiving the Law on Sinai—the Descent of the Holy Ghost on the Saviour in the Jordan—the Opening of the Seventh Seal in the Revelations—Saint Michael and his Angels casting out the Great Dragon—the mighty Angel with one foot on sea and the other on earth—the Resurrection!—and there are many others of the same class! With such magnificence and sublimity who but a Michael Angelo could cope?

In all his works the human form was exhibited in conformity to academic precepts—his figures were arranged with skill—the colouring was varied and often harmonious—the eye rested pleased on the performance, and the artist seemed, to the ordinary spectator, to have done his task like one of the highest of the sons of genius. But below all this splendour there was little of the true vitality—there was a monotony, too, of human character—the groupings were unlike the happy and careless combinations of nature, and the figures frequently seemed distributed over the canvas by line and measure, like trees in a plantation. He wanted fire and imagination to be the true restorer of that grand style, which bewildered Barry, and was talked of by Reynolds. Some of his works—cold, formal, bloodless, and passionless—may remind the spectator of the sublime vision of the valley of dry bones, when

be met with in galleries or private collections, but for the most part his pictures have long been assigned to the limbo where

> "Lethe, the river of oblivion, rolls
> Her watery labyrinth."

Of the four hundred Cunningham enumerates, not above twenty have remained known to fame.—Ed.

the flesh and skin had come upon the skeletons, and before the breath of God had informed them with life and feeling.

Though such is the general impression which the works of West make, it cannot be denied that many are distinguished by great excellence. In his "Death on the Pale Horse," and more particularly in the sketch of that picture, he has more than approached the masters and princes of the calling. It is, indeed, irresistibly fearful to see the triumphant march of the terrific Phantom, and the dissolution of all that earth is proud of beneath his tread. War and peace, sorrow and joy, youth and age, all who love and all who hate, seem planet-struck. The "Death of Wolfe," too, is natural and noble, and the Indian chief, like the Oneyda warrior of Campbell,

"A stoic of the woods, a man without a tear,"

was a happy thought. The "Battle of La Hogue" I have heard praised as *the best* historic picture of the British school, by one not likely to be mistaken, and who would not say what he did not feel. Many of his single figures, also, are of a high order. There is a natural grace in the looks of some of his women, which few painters have ever excelled.

West was injured by early success—he obtained his fame too easily—it was not purchased by long study and many trials—and he rashly imagined himself capable of anything. But the coldness of his imagination nipt the blossoms of history. It is the province of art to elevate the subject in the spirit of its nature—and brooding over the whole with the feeling of a poet, awaken the scene into vivid life and heroic beauty; but such mastery rarely waited upon the ambition of this amiable and upright man.

JAMES BARRY.

JAMES BARRY was born in Cork, on the 11th of October, 1741. His mother's maiden name was Juliana Rœrden; her ancestors had lost large estates in the county Cork, through rebellions and revolutions; "and his father, whose name was John," says one of his biographers, "had no occasion to blush at his pedigree, if it be true that he was of a collateral branch of the family, which has been honoured with the Earldom of Barrymore." Whatever his remote ancestors were, we are certain that John Barry was bred a builder; that his want of success drove him to the sea; that, for many years, he commanded a vessel which traded between the Cove of Cork and England;[1] and that he was fortunate in none of his pursuits.

Of the early education of James Barry we have but an imperfect account; but it must have been watched over with no common care, for, in after life, when learning was wanted, no one found him deficient. When very young his father took him to sea; but to be pent up in a floating prison, to see the same monotonous scene setting upon him at night, and opening upon him every day, and to drudge and become familiar with the severe duties of a mariner's life, were not for one on whose mind art had already dawned. In the first place he ran away, and was with difficulty found and brought back; and secondly, instead of handling ropes and adjusting sails, it was his pleasure to make sketches of the coast along which he sailed, or to draw groups and single figures upon the deck, to the amusement of the sailors and the vexation of his father. It was idle to contend against the determined disposition of this wilful boy; his father sent him back to his mother, and he resumed his books and crayons. In the happier

[1] He also, it is said, kept a small public-house.—Ed.

moments of his manhood he has been heard to allude jocularly to his marine apprenticeship.

Painting was the natural rather than the accidental direction of his mind. He sketched and drew at an earlier age than his sister, who long survived him, could name. When the father returned and saw his son's colossal outlines in black and red chalk, on walls, floors, and furniture, the rough sailor spoke with great bitterness, and said the boy had abandoned a trade which produced daily bread for wild and unprofitable nonsense. He sought shelter behind his mother's chair, who protected him, and encouraged him in his pursuits.

On leaving the sea he was sent to school, where his quickness of parts and his stubborn and solitary disposition attracted notice. During the hours of leisure he read or drew. Whole nights, his sister said, were taken from sleep; he spent all his pocket money on pencils and candles; and when, alarmed for his health, the servants, in arranging his room, secreted his candles, he would not allow them to go there any more, but locked the door and made the bed for himself. His bed became hard and uncomfortable. His mother wished to render it softer, and to introduce order into his apartment; but he resisted her also. Even in these early days he exhibited a spirit intractable and capricious, and declared his love for those ascetic and self-denying habits which assume the name of virtues in the legends of the Romish church.

He sometimes, however, mingled in schoolboy amusements; and on one of those occasions, wishing to conceal himself from his companions in the favourite game called "Hide and Seek," he entered a ruinous house in an obscure lane, which had neither doors nor windows, and was said to be haunted. On running up the half-rotten stairs, and entering an upper room, he saw two old and withered figures sitting in rags and wretchedness beside a handful of expiring embers, tearing each other's faces, and accompanying every tug with grimaces which demons might have envied. They heeded him not, but tore away, and he retired, making, he said, two reflections on what he had seen—"That man is malicious in proportion as he is im-

potent," and "that age and want add to their inherent miseries evils all their own." The moral inference which he seeks to draw from this sad scene is unjust to human nature. The evils, indeed, of weakness and want are not little—they are an ill-matched pair, though often seen together; but weakness of body is frequently accompanied by great benevolence of mind, and there is a philosophic or devout spirit of endurance in those afflicted with poverty and old age, which Barry might have discovered wherever he went on the earth. But from his earliest years he indulged in curious opinions, and affected singularity of dress—as those often do who are resolved to become noticed for *something*. He sought the company only of the old and the educated, listened to all they said, showed anxiety after knowledge, and wore a garb so coarse and so plain that it seemed as if he were suffering under a rule of religious mortification. His school-fellows considered his learning so extraordinary that, in letters yet extant, they speak of him as a prodigy of knowledge, from whom they were accustomed to receive opinions as from a master.

His mother, a zealous Catholic, and whose affection for the old faith was increased by a sense of the loss of family wealth and importance, exercised a strong and a lasting influence over him. His father, a Protestant, committed all domestic matters to his wife, and probably thought of doctrinal disputes with the lightness of a sailor; she, in her turn, committed her son to the care and conversation of two Catholic priests, who, to learning, added the zeal which thirsts for proselytes, and that enthusiasm which, directed with prudence against the youthful and the imaginative, is sure to triumph. He was artfully involved in the mazes of religious controversy, and had to seek his way out in the company of those who coveted his conversion. Other temptations were held out, of notice and preferment, and he was soon hailed as a stray sheep won back to the fold. A report was diligently circulated that his learning and talents were to be dedicated to the service of the suffering church; but as soon as he had openly committed himself as a Catholic, his nomination to the priesthood was heard of no more.

To the Romish church he was much attached in youth, but his residence in Rome made him waver not a little. There he saw more than he wished to have seen, and was about to seek refuge from superstition in infidelity, when he was saved, as he always acknowledged, by a book sent to him by Edmund Burke. The work which did this good deed was that precious one, Butler's "Analogy of Religion, natural and revealed, to the constitution and course of nature." In after-life he rewarded the author by placing him high amongst those divines whom he admitted into his painting of Elysium. But he was far too ardent and unbalanced to remain steady at the wholesome point of belief where Bishop Butler had left him. He became, as life advanced and vexations thickened, a blind and bigoted follower of the creed of Rome, and somewhat stern and uncharitable towards those who differed from him in matters of faith: but we are anticipating.

When he was some twelve or fifteen years old—tradition is no accurate observer of dates—a bookseller in Cork had such confidence in his powers, that he employed him to make the designs—some add the etchings—for a small volume of tales which he was publishing. Of these, if they ever existed, no account is given, and the book has been sought for in vain; nor, indeed, is there any precise information to be had concerning the subjects which employed his boyish pencil: he probably retained his sketches till ripening judgment condemned them, and then committed to the fire those witnesses of an undisciplined hand and an ill-regulated fancy. Having no one to guide him in art as he had to mislead him in religion, he had to grope his own way to excellence, and attain it as he best might.[1] We know that ere he left Cork, he had painted in oil-colour, "Eneas escaping from the burning of Troy,"—"A dead Christ,"—"Susanna and the Elders,"—"Daniel in the Lions' Den,"—and "Abraham's Sacrifice;" but

[1] He probably received some instruction at Cork; but at an early age he went to Dublin, where, according to a writer in the "Journal of the Society of Arts," he entered the school of a painter named West, an artist who had studied under Boucher and Vanloo, and was reckoned an able draughtsman of the human figure.—Ed.

whether these were copies or original compositions it is not mentioned. Such subjects are frequently chosen by young and presumptuous men, who imagine that it is grand and daring to single out a sublime or splendid scene from history or poetry—they have yet to learn, and they will soon discover it, that a lofty subject requires to be nobly handled. Those early attempts of Barry were long afterwards to be seen on the walls of his father's house.

His name had not yet been heard of beyond Cork; it was soon to be known in remote parts, and received with a favour which must have fallen on Barry like a shower upon a summer drought. There is a tradition in the Irish Church concerning the conversion of a king of Cashel by the eloquence of St. Patrick. The barbarian prince, when the apostle concluded his exhortation, called loudly to be baptized, and such was the hurry of the one, and the fortitude of the other, that though the Saint, implanting his iron-shod crosier in the ground, struck it unwittingly through the royal convert's foot, he uttered not one murmur, nor yet moved a muscle, but conceiving it to be a part of the ceremony, stood and was baptized. "The moment of baptism," says Dr. Fryer, "rendered so critical and awful by the circumstance of the king's foot being pierced with the spear, is that which Mr. Barry chose for the display of his art; and few stories, it is presumed, have been selected with greater felicity, or with greater scope for the skill and ingenuity of the artist. The heroic patience of the king, the devotional abstraction of the saint, and the mixed emotions of the spectators, form a combined and comprehensive model of imitation, and convey a suitable idea of the genius of one, who, self-instructed, and at nineteen, conceived the execution of so grand a design."

With this work in his hand, Barry went to Dublin, and placed it among the paintings collecting for exhibition by the Society for the Encouragement of Arts, Manufactures, and Commerce. He was at this time utterly unfriended and unknown, coarsely clad, and with something of the stamp of one enduring poverty upon him. The picture was exhibited and admired; but so little was such a work

expected from a native artist, that when the name of the painter was demanded, and he stepped modestly forward, no one would believe him—his brow glowed, he burst into tears, and hurried out of the room. All this was observed by Edmund Burke, one of the greatest and best-hearted of all the sons of genius. He sought the young artist out, commended and encouraged him, laid down the natural rules of composition, and directed his attention to what was pure and poetical. One of those incidents which biographers love to relate, and the world indulgently believes, is said to have happened at the very first interview between those two youthful adventurers. They had plunged into controversy in the first hour of their friendship, and Barry, in aid of his argument, quoted a passage from the Essay on the Sublime and Beautiful, then published without the author's name. Burke refused to bow to the authority of a performance which he called slight and unsubstantial, and the fiery Barry exclaimed, "Do you call that a slight and unsubstantial work which is conceived in the spirit of nature and truth—is written with such elegance, and strewn all over with the richness of poetic fancy? I could not afford to buy the work, Sir, and transcribed it every word with my own hand." Burke smiled, and acknowledged himself the author. "Are you, by God!" exclaimed Barry, embracing him, and holding out the copy which he had made of the work. Such is the story. Burke was well known to be the author, and enjoyed the reputation, of the Essay, before his name was attached to it; and if Barry had taken the trouble to transcribe the work, it does not seem likely that he should have carried the copy in his pocket. Still, we must not too rashly apply to such a person the rules by which we are entitled to judge in matters concerning the ordinary brethren of the race.

He continued to reside for some time in Dublin. The way to fame, and perhaps fortune, lay open before him. Burke had praised his works, and assured him of his protection, and he had only to walk circumspectly, and act with prudence, to become an honour to his native land. Dr. Sleigh, of Cork, an early and benevolent friend, con-

gratulating him on having met with that countenance in Dublin which he had sought and merited in vain in his native city, counselled a journey to Rome, and the study of Spenser, Shakespeare, and Milton. This was not lost on Barry. "To Dr. Sleigh," he used to say, "I am indebted for whatever education and fortune and fame I may have in the world." Sudden success unsettled him for a time; the fame of his work brought a crowd of those unsafe companions who clap their hands at the sight of a new favourite of fortune, and flutter about the prodigy like moths round a candle. In their company he sometimes forgot himself; he was sensible of the folly, and on his way home from a deep carouse determined on immediate amendment. This fit of repentance found him at the side of the Liffey; he stood and upbraided his own easiness of temper, and cursed the money in his pocket as a fiend that had tempted him to the tavern. He threw his purse into the river, ran home, and resumed his interrupted studies. He afterwards related this to an outspoken friend. "Ah, Barry! man," said he, "you threw away your luck—you never had either gold or good temper to spare afterwards."

In his twenty-third year he went to London, on the invitation of Burke, who introduced him to Athenian Stuart, whose talk confirmed him in his love of the ancients, and to Sir Joshua Reynolds, in whose works he studied delicacy of style, propriety of character, and force of light and shade. "If I should chance to have genius, or anything else," he observes, in a letter to Dr. Sleigh, "it is so much the better; but my hopes are grounded upon an unwearied intense application, of which I am not sparing. At present I have little to show that I value; my work is all under ground, digging and laying foundations, which, with God's assistance, I may hereafter find the use of. I every day centre more and more upon the art; I give myself totally to it: and, except honour and conscience, am determined to renounce everything else. Though this may appear enthusiastic, or rather extravagant, it is really the state of my mind." Nothing great can ever be accomplished without enthusiasm; but it requires to be a little

better regulated than poor Barry's. For the most part his notions of other men's talents were at this early period equally decided and just. "The colouring of Wilson is very masterly," he observes in one of his letters, "his style of design is more grand, more consistent, and more poetical than any other person's amongst us." His admiration, however, was not always so well placed; he praised the Achilles and Patroclus of Hamilton, for which he was rebuked by some of the elder brethren of the brush. He gave them a tasting of his spirit in two or three sarcastic sentences, in which he vindicated his right to freedom of opinion. They shrugged their shoulders, looked on one another, were irritated, and were silenced.

Barry pursued his studies in London for a year. The presence and the society of Burke awed down the natural sharpness of his temper, and in his company he began to practise the courtesies of polished life, and appeared in a dress becoming the station to which he aspired. He had already determined to be a historical painter. The true nature of that style could never, in the opinion of Reynolds, be ascertained, without a visit to the Sistine Chapel; but such a pilgrimage could not be accomplished by one so poor as Barry, and he was in despair—when Burke generously interposed, fitted him out for his journey, and settled an annual pension upon him during the period of probationary study.

On his way through France[1] he admired and copied the "Alexander drinking the Potion" by Le Sueur, and visited the Academy of St. Luke, on which he remarks to Burke: "I don't like an academy; it is a thing which, wherever it is founded, will, I think, bring the arts into contempt, and consequently, to destruction. We have two of them here; there are such mobs of blackguards go every night to acquire a trade there, as is enough to shock anyone who

[1] Barry went to Paris in the February of 1766, and remained there until the following September. The letters he wrote home during this period are very interesting. Burke says of them: "Your letters are very kind in remembering us; and surely, as to criticism of every kind, admirable. Reynolds likes them exceedingly. He conceives extraordinary hopes of you."—Ed.

has the least regard for the art. People send their children to make them painters and statuaries, without learning or genius, or indeed anything else, only because it is less expensive than making them peruquiers or shoemakers." With better sense, he continues: "Drawing and modelling in the academy, with the assistance of a master, is not likely to mislead any one, and must be useful to men of real genius." He was so much charmed with the people and the scenery of Burgundy, that he stopped at an inn and wrote to Burke: "*We* may talk as much as we please about cultivation and plenty; but I must honestly confess I never before saw anything but the faint glimmerings of it, compared with this land, where nature seems ambitious of doing everything for herself. The people, who are extremely numerous, are, for the most part, amply employed in the gathering and storing of fruits. Methinks, without any great poetic license, it is somewhat probable, when Bacchus made his rounds of the earth, that his head-quarters must have been in one of the valleys of Burgundy, where, on every side, mountain peeps over mountain, and appears clothed in the varied hues of the vine, interspersed with sheep and corn. This, and the crowds of busy contented people, who cover the whole face of the country, make a strong but melancholy contrast to a miserable isle which I cannot help thinking of sometimes—you will not be at a loss to know that I mean Ireland."

At Rome, Barry found letters awaiting him, containing the agreeable assurance that his "Alexander and the Potion," which he had presented to Burke, was pronounced by Reynolds correct in drawing, and in expression just and noble. In the lustre of colouring Barry never excelled, and the President was silent concerning that matter; he counselled, however, the constant study of Michael Angelo; to the Sistine Chapel the young painter hastened accordingly, and the following are some of his observations:—"The deep knowledge of the ancients in anatomy, is, I think, as observable in the Apollo and the Antinous, as it is in the Laocoon and the Torso, whose flesh is of a more rigid texture: and the disappearing of the muscles as the figure approaches the delicate, is the

consequence of as certain observations and principles as their introduction would be in a figure of a different character. The knowledge, freedom, and greatness of style in drawing, are, I think, the only part of the character of Michael Angelo which has been well understood. It has been, and is every day observed, that notwithstanding the number of figures in "The Last Judgment," there is but one character of body, placed in a vast diversity of attitudes, the model of which is said to have been his porter. It is not so literally the case, though I believe he might have intended it, in conformity to a prevailing opinion that at the Resurrection all bodies will be of the same age and character. I do not think the expression of countenance, either in him or Raphael, indicates in a very clear and particular manner, the intentions and state of mind of the persons to whom this countenance is given."

His letters, his conversation, his skill in drawing, his enthusiasm and poetic imagination, had raised high expectations in the minds of English friends. They thought with satisfaction of the rich opportunities now before him, and of the use such a man must make of them—but, unfortunately, controversy was his chief delight; and of this he soon found enough to satisfy a whole academy. It happened that Rome, at this period, was visited by one of those gentlemen who, with a little income, a little learning, a little knowledge of art, and a full capacity for speech, wander from gallery to gallery, delivering opinions upon works of genius with a confidence which passes with the world for the offspring of refined taste and profound knowledge. Against this person the Irish impetuosity of Barry precipitated him at once. "As he is a man of great civility," thus he writes to Burke, "I never would have thought of contradicting him, had I not seen clearly into the drift and tendency of his frequent hints of the incapacity of the people at Rome, and that a nod from him would set his dependents to tear up and trample on everything we hold sacred. Reynolds could not draw—his colouring was white, was blue, was red, was everything that would damn him; he stole what he had, and mangled what he stole. Gainsborough's landscapes were mere nosegays; and West,

who was so much the fashion, afforded a convincing proof that drawing was not sought after, and that a true idea of art was wanting."

To confute such a sweeping censure as this, Barry could bring knowledge and sense; but he was deficient in that courtesy and graciousness of manner which takes the sting out of contradiction. He was vehement, and he was incensed: nor did he seek to conceal his indignation; the consequences are clearly described by his own pen:—"I had no sooner attempted to excuse our artists from these aspersions—but I was immediately pointed out as a person who, not coinciding with the designs of the dealers, might be dangerous in the company of English cavaliers, where it was necessary every now and then to run into praises of an indifferent antique head, with a modern body and legs cobbled to it, or of an old picture, which they christen in the name of this or that master, and which has no other merit but that—as nothing is visible, nothing can be objected to it. As the English have much money to lay out in virtù, and as they have perhaps a greater passion for the ancients than they have, generally speaking, judgment to distinguish among them, those in whose hands they fall here, and to whom their commissions are sent, take care to provide heads with bodies and legs, and *vice versâ*. Fragments of all the gods are jumbled together, legs and heads of fairies and graces, till a monster is produced. Though for the most part intrigue and mercenary ways are prevalent here, truth is never without a witness."

All this was honest, intrepid, and imprudent. His fame was yet to make, and his character was much in those men's power, and he was made to feel it. Sly old antiquarians cunningly inveigled him into conversation, and exhibited him to the English travellers as, heated with controversy he threw his sarcasms, right and left, among all who sold and all who purchased busts without heads and daubings of the dark masters. This consumed his time, took his attention from study, and invaded that tranquillity of mind which is so necessary for all noble pursuits. In the midst of these distractions, a long and friendly

letter from Sir Joshua Reynolds sought to reclaim him from disputation, and bind him heartily to Michael Angelo and Raphael. "If you should not relish their works at first," said the President, "which may probably be the case, as they have none of those qualities which are captivating at first sight, never cease looking till you find something like inspiration come over you, till you think every other painter insipid in comparison, and to be admired only for petty excellencies."

Barry failed to discover in the compositions of these illustrious masters the entire proportion, and grace, and simplicity, of the Grecian sculpture. He was too ardent in his nature to keep this belief to himself; he preached this unheard-of heresy in Rome, with the fervour of a devotee; and thus unbosomed himself to Burke. "I see," he said, "in no part of Raphael's works, any figure that I may call truly and correctly beautiful, like the Antinous, or the Venus of Medici—or any that is truly good, like the bust of Alexander—or sublime, like the Apollo. As to the Torso, the Laocoon, and such like characters, he appears not at all qualified to succeed in them. As to his cartoons, and his pictures in the Vatican, they may be more expressive of the passions, and may be more correct in a mediocrity of character—a little more than that which comes into any of those works, or even into his transfiguration. Michael Angelo appears still less near the standard than Raphael. He is infinitely above Raphael in knowledge and correctness, yet his ostentation and show of this, and Raphael's art of concealing—with choice of subject and pleasing well-wrought draperies—his want of it, bring them nearly to a level, at least with the bulk of mankind; yet I rather believe fewer people have attained Michael Angelo's merits than Raphael's, though no one has come near Raphael upon the whole."

Barry loved simple beauty of form. Reynolds admired the splendid effects of light and shade. The former saw and worshipped in the marbles of Greece a severe and dignified grandeur, all attained without startling attitudes or violent motion: the latter discovered the perfection of art in the profuse draperies, imposing effects, and quiet

grace of Angelo and Raphael. These two men were in their natures essentially dissimilar, and looked upon the works of the great masters with very different eyes. How Sir Joshua received the account of Barry's heresy concerning Michael Angelo we are not informed, but we gather from a letter addressed to him soon afterwards, that Barry was unwilling to be suspected of coldness or indifference concerning the glories of the Sistine Chapel. But poor Barry was an indifferent dissembler: his raptures were felt to be artificial: the President shrugged his shoulders, as was his custom, and never advised him more.

In the third year of his residence in Rome he made an excursion to Naples. "At Nitri, a miserable little town in the Neapolitan territory," he says in one of his letters, "are monuments which gave me heartfelt pleasure. One is a piece of raw hide, a little broader than the sole of the foot, tied on in the manner of the ancient sandal. I bought a pair of them, which I will put on, to show you the villany of our cursed Gothic shoes, which by the line which the termination of the upper leather makes upon the stocking, cuts off the foot from the leg, and loses that fine idea of one limb which is kept up in this vestige of a sandal. Another monument is the manner of tying up the hair of the women. I gave one of them money—made drawings of it—loosed it, and made drawings again—so that I know everything about it, and shall be of great use to the ladies when I come home. Blessed be the poverty of this people, and long may it continue to their posterity! it has preserved to them, though in a state of ignorance, the elegant notions of their forefathers; it has kept it out of their power to flaunt about after the deliriums and new-fangled whims of fashionable people in great cities; and you shall not be able in your Londons, your Parises, and Romes, to cull me out such an object as one of these women standing near a fountain, with her sweet, antique-formed vase on her head. At Naples also is to be seen the same way of tying up the hair as in many bustos—the cloth which lies across it in other heads of antiquity, and the reta, net, or cap, inclosing all; and even without quitting the vulgar

women of Naples, I will show you amongst them all the different head-dresses of the Nine Muses. I find the love of antiquity growing upon me every day."

After a brief interval, fatigued with studying from the antique, with discovering resemblances between the dresses of the Italian rustics and the classic costume of Attica, and with gazing on Titian, whom he at this time preferred to all painters of these latter days—Barry once more sought amusement in disputes with fellow artists, and in hostile bickerings with wandering virtuosi and pedestrian picture-dealers. Burke had long been sensible of this grievous infirmity in his friend's temper, and in a series of eloquent and affectionate letters, endeavoured to soothe down his rugged spirit, and sugar over the bitterness of his nature. It was all in vain. "You have given," thus writes Burke, "a strong, and, I fancy, a very faithful picture of the dealers in taste with you. It is very right that you should know and remark their little arts: but as fraud will intermeddle in every transaction of life, where we cannot oppose ourselves to it with effect, it is by no means our duty or our interest to make ourselves uneasy, or multiply enemies on account of it. In particular, you may be assured that the traffic in antiquity, and all the enthusiasm, folly, or fraud, which may be in it, never did, nor ever can, hurt the merit of living artists; quite the contrary, in my opinion; for I have ever observed that whatever it be that turns the minds of men to anything relative to the arts, brings artists more and more into credit and repute; and though now and then the mere broker and dealer in such things runs away with a great deal of the profit, yet in the end ingenious men will find themselves gainers by the dispositions which are nourished and diffused in the world by such pursuits. I praise exceedingly your resolution of going on well with those whose practices you cannot altogether approve—*there is no living in this world upon any other terms.*"

If Barry ever formed the resolution of living on terms of peace with these men of virtù, his intractable temper soon broke it. He was now, by his own account, become so fastidious in his taste that even Titian could no longer

please him—he looked with scorn upon all works below his own air-drawn standard of excellence, and regarded, and addressed with sarcastic displeasure, all, "whose gods were not his gods." It was his misfortune that he uniformly fancied himself the conqueror in these uncivil debates: hence a growing belief that the time must come when there would be a reaction of popular feeling in favour of one who had braved martyrdom in the cause of honesty in picture dealing. He acknowledged, meantime, the influence of his enemies in that sensitive part, the pocket, and said they had made his profession unprofitable—which he lamented, not on his own account, but for the sake of his benevolent friend Burke. "It has been a real grief to me," he writes to his patron, "that I could not contribute to lighten the expenses your good-nature and generosity have led you into for me. I have nothing to say on my own behalf, but that I shall carry myself so, both as a man and an artist, as never to bring a blush on your face on my account." He imagines, however, that the uncivility of his opponents had done him some service, by confirming him in the resolution of playing a high game in art, and he even attributes to their malice the great progress he is making in his studies. "I saw from the beginning that I was hated—and hated for the very dispositions I relied upon to recommend me. I saw every avenue shut up from me by their power and industry, except the glorious one of my profession, so I went seriously to work and left to them the cavaliers and the wasting away of their time, in dressing up phantoms and distorted macaronies in my name."

It must be confessed that Barry looked upon life with strange eyes. "Out of the nettle danger he loved to pluck the flower safety." By living at dagger's drawing with his brethren, he avoided the expense, he said, of treats and taverns: and to their satiric comments upon his colouring, he owed, he declared, his knowledge of the merits of Titian! Having unconsciously done him these favours, his enemies commenced an attack upon him personally. "This," he says, with a smile, "was more in their power, for though the body and the soul of a picture will discover

themselves on the slightest glance, yet you know it could not be the same with such a pock-pitted hard-featured little fellow as I am . . . . . so that I shall be surprised if you have not been frightened with the terrible accounts given of me." The answer of Mr. Burke to all this is marked by his uncommon qualities of head and heart—it shows intimate knowledge of the world and its ways, and a perfect appreciation of the failings and excellencies of the singular person to whom it is addressed. The date is London, 16th September, 1769.

"As to reports, my dear Barry, concerning your conduct and behaviour, you may be very sure they would have no kind of influence here; for none of us are of such a make as to trust to anyone's report for the character of a person whom we ourselves know. Until very lately I have never heard anything of your proceedings from others; and when I did, it was much less than I had known from myself—that you had been upon ill terms with the artists and virtuosi of Rome, without much mention of cause or consequence. If you have improved these unfortunate quarrels to your advancement in your art, you have turned a very disagreeable circumstance to a very capital advantage. However you may have succeeded in this uncommon attempt, permit me to suggest to you, with that friendly liberty which you have always had the goodness to bear from me, that you cannot possibly always have the same success, either with regard to your fortune or your reputation. Depend upon it that you will find the same competitions, the same jealousies, the same arts and cabals, the emulations of interest and of fame, and the same agitations and passions here that you have experienced in Italy; and if they have the same effect on your temper, they will have just the same effects on your interest; and be your merit what it will, you will never be allowed to paint a picture. It will be the same at London as at Rome, and the same in Paris as in London; for the world is pretty nearly alike in all its parts; nay, though perhaps it would be a little inconvenient to me, I had a thousand times rather you should fix your residence in Rome than here, as I should not then have the mortifica-

tion of seeing with my own eyes, a genius of the first rank, lost to the world, himself and his friends, as I certainly must, if you do not assume a manner of acting and thinking here totally different from what your letters from Rome have described to me. That you had just subjects of indignation always, and of anger often, I do noways doubt; who can live in the world without some trial of his patience? But, believe me, my dear Barry, that the arms with which the ill-dispositions of the world are to be combated, and the qualities by which it is to be reconciled to us, and we reconciled to it, are moderation, gentleness, a little indulgence to others, and a great deal of distrust of ourselves; which are not qualities of a mean spirit, as some may possibly think them, but virtues of a great and noble kind, and such as dignify our nature as much as they contribute to our repose and fortune; for nothing can be so unworthy of a well-composed soul as to pass away life in bickerings and litigations; in snarling and scuffling with everyone about us. Again and again, my dear Barry, we must be at peace with our species, if not for their sakes, yet very much for our own."

The conclusion of this memorable letter seems dictated by a species of inspiration, which, looking mournfully and prophetically forward, expressed in a few, clear, and eloquent words, the disastrous career of the object of all this solicitude.

"Think what my feelings must be, from my unfeigned regard for you, and from my wishes that your talents might be of use, when I see what the inevitable consequences must be of your persevering in what has hitherto been your course ever since I knew you, and which you will permit me to trace out to you beforehand. You will come here: you will observe what the artists are doing: and you will sometimes speak disapprobation in plain words, and sometimes in no less expressive silence: by degrees you will produce some of your own works. They will be variously criticised: you will defend them: you will abuse those who have attacked you: expostulations, discussions, letters, possibly challenges, will go forward —you will shun your brethren—they will shun you. In

the mean time gentlemen will avoid your friendship, for fear of being engaged in your quarrels: you will fall into distress, which will only aggravate your disposition for further quarrels; you will be obliged, for maintenance, to do anything for anybody; your very talents will depart for want of hope and encouragement, and you will go out of the world fretted, disappointed, and ruined. Nothing but my real regard for you could induce me to set these considerations in this light before you. Remember, we are born to serve and to adorn our country, and not to contend with our fellow-citizens—and that, in particular, your business is to paint, and not to dispute."

It really appears that Barry imagined himself all this while one of the meekest beings that ever studied the antique. The fear of some, and the hatred of others, he imputed to any cause save his own headlong impetuosity of temper; nay, he actually seems to have supposed that his scornful sallies and sarcastic criticisms, would be received with thankfulness, since they sprung from nothing but zeal for the benefit of art. From the first day of his appearance in Rome, he took the station of a judge, and delivered opinions with the intrepidity of one grown grey in study and in fame. All this in a young man of three or four and twenty, who could not as yet appeal to the excellence of his own works as his warrant, was not likely to be received with gratitude, particularly by a proverbially thin-skinned and irritable tribe. Yet he never conceived he was to blame, and wrote down art as largely his debtor for candour and boldness. He defied the world, but he defended himself to Burke. "Your friendship is, I think, as visible in the warm picture you have drawn of my contentious disposition, as in any other part of your generous conduct towards me; but then shall I assure you that I am not that censorious inspector and publisher of the defects of other artists.? No; you know me better, notwithstanding what you have said, and I know, whether from my vanity or my virtue, if I have any, you will never meet with an artist more warm and just to the merit of his brethren, or more inclined to overlook their deficiencies than I am."

A charge of a graver nature than infirmity of temper, after having long been whispered about in professional coteries has lately been set forth in Mr. Smith's Life of Nollekens. "Barry, the historical painter," says this writer, "who was extremely intimate with Nollekens at Rome,[1] took the liberty one night, when they were about to leave the English Coffee-house, to exchange hats with him. Barry's hat was edged with lace, and Nollekens' was a very shabby plain one. Upon his returning the hat next morning, he was requested by Nollekens to let him know why he left him his gold-laced hat. 'Why, to tell you the truth, my dear Joey,' answered Barry, 'I fully expected assassination last night, and I was to have been known by my gold-laced hat.' This villanous transaction, which might have proved fatal to Nollekens, I have often heard him relate, and he generally added, 'It's what the Old Bailey people would call a true bill against Jem.'"

Such is Smith's story; and it is well known to many that Nollekens often related it—but nevertheless we must receive it with distrust and suspicion. Barry was fierce, sullen, and sarcastic, but I cannot believe him capable of an atrocity. At all events he was not a fool—and that he should put the life of an innocent man in jeopardy at night to save his own, and in the morning acknowledge his guilt so gaily to his intended victim, appears incredible. The story must have originated in some practical joke—some betting speculation, perhaps, upon the well-known weakness of Nollekens. No one who knew Barry could believe him guilty of conduct at once so base and so absurd; and indeed the sculptor appears to have sufficiently refuted the serious interpretation of his own story, by promoting the interests and defending the cause of Barry in the Royal Academy, when all others had forsaken him.

Barry had now remained five years in Rome.[2] He had

[1] From his letters it would not appear that Barry was intimate with Nollekens at Rome. He says, in one written in November, 1767: "We have some sculptors here, too, amongst whom is a Mr. Nollekens, an Englishman, who is extremely well at copying the antique."—Ed.

[2] Only four years. He went to Rome in the autumn of 1766, and was back in London in 1770.—Ed.

examined, and studied, and copied those works on which the world had set the seal of approbation. Nor had he laboured for subsistence, for the munificence of Burke and his brothers had placed him above want; he was requested to draw upon them for such sums as he might require beyond his stated allowance of fifty pounds a year. He had, in short, laid in an ample stock of knowledge; and was now about to return to England, to carry his acquirements into practice. Something like misgivings from time to time came across his mind; he had doubts of final success, and even fears, now and then, that he might have, after all, mistaken the proper course of study, and bowed to unprofitable gods. "Oh, I could be happy," he very movingly says, "on my going home, to find some corner, where I could sit down in the middle of my studies, books, and casts after the antique to paint this work and others, where I might have models of nature when necessary, bread and soup, and a coat to cover me! I should care not what became of my work when it was done; but I reflect with horror upon such a fellow as I am, and with such a kind of art, in London, with house rent to pay, duns to follow me, and employers to look for. Had I studied art in a manner more accommodated to the nation, there would be no dread of this."

On the 22nd of April, 1770, he left Rome, and proceeded to examine the principal galleries which lay in his way home. His memorandums are numerous, and all marked by his peculiarity of character, and idolatry of the antique. The Venus and Apollo had blinded him to all other excellence. "I am arrived," said he, "at that unlucky pass, that nothing will go down with me but perfection, at least in some one of the grand essentials of a picture. In Turin I saw the Royal Collection of Pictures; but, except one or two by Guido, which I did not like, all the rest are Flemish and Dutch. Rubens, Rembrandt, Vandyke, Teniers, and Schalken, are without the pales of my church; and though I will not condemn them, yet I must hold no intercourse with them. God help you, Barry, said I, where is the use of your hairbreadth niceties and your antiques? Behold the hand-writing upon the wall against you. In the country

to which you are going, pictures of lemon-peels, oysters, and tricks of colour, are in as much request as they are here." There were moods, nevertheless, in which he felt the difficulty of judging wisely of a work of genius, and he spoke truly when he said, "One painter is a very improper person to give an account of another that is out of the pale of his school; they must think of one another as the Catholics and Calvinists do—all without-doors is damnation."

He reached Milan. He was unnoticed and unknown; his enemies were far behind; and he seemed in a fair way of returning to London in tranquillity and peace. But even here controversy fell in his way, and he embraced it. The Medusa's head of Leonardo da Vinci—with its gloomy brow, watery eyes, and looks full of agony—had gained that eminent painter a place in Barry's esteem, and he went to pay a visit to his celebrated "Last Supper." His own account of what followed is too characteristic to be omitted, and too dramatic to be abridged.

"When I came into the Refetorio I found a scaffold erected, which on ascending I saw one-half of the picture covered by a great cloth. On examining the other part that was uncovered, I found the skin of colour which composed the picture to be all cracked into little squares of about the eighteenth of an inch over, which were for the most part in their edges loosened from the wall and curling up: however, nothing was materially lost. I saw that the picture had been formerly repaired in some few places; yet as this was not much, and as the other parts were untouched, there was nothing to complain of. The wonderful truth and variety of the expressions, so well described by Vasari and Rubens, and the admirable finesse of finish and relievo taken notice of by Armineni, were still remaining. Whilst I was examining this part of the picture, two gentlemen came upon the scaffold, and drew aside the cloth which covered the other half, which, to my great horror and astonishment, was repainted. One of those men was at great pains to show the vast improvements the picture was receiving by this repainting; but the repainting and the discourse so kindled my indignation,

that I was no longer master of myself. 'What, Sir,' said I, 'is it possible you do not perceive how this painter—if I can call him painter—has destroyed the picture in every part on which he has laid his stupid hands? Do not you see that this head is distorted and out of drawing, that there is no longer significance or expression in it, that all his colouring is crude, and wants accord? Do, Sir, open your eyes, and compare it with the other half of the picture, which he has not as yet buried under his cursed colours.' He answered me, that this was only a dead colour, and the painter was to go over it a second time. 'O, confusion!' said I, 'so much the worse. If he has thus lost his way whilst he was immediately going over the lines and colours of Leonardo's work, what will become of him when he has no longer any guide, and is left blind and abandoned to his own ignorance?' And turning myself to two friars of the convent who stood by, 'Fathers,' said I, 'this picture and the painter of it have suffered much by the ignorance of your order. It was white-washed over some years ago; it has been again hurt in washing off the white; and now you have got a beast to paint another picture upon it, who knows no more of the matter than you do yourselves. There was no occasion for thus covering it over with new colours: it might easily be secured in those parts that are loosening from the wall, and it would stand probably as long as your order will.' The friar told me that he did not understand those matters, and that he spoke but very little Italian—that he was Irish, and that it was by order of the Count de Firmian, who was secretary of state, that this picture was repainted. 'Indeed, then, countryman,' said I, 'the world will be very little obliged to Count de Firmian: it were to be wished, and it will be for the honour and interest of your convent, if you can prevail upon the Count to spare at least what is remaining of the picture, and take down the scaffold immediately.'"

Of his five years' occupation abroad, a very general account must be rendered. Much of his time was consumed in this sort of warfare; a little was given to a very ingenious inquiry into the origin of Gothic architecture,

and to the collection of those historical materials which he afterwards used in his refutation of Winkelmann; but many hours, doubtless, were devoted to the proper objects of his professional study. His ardent spirit enabled him to master much in a little while; and he seems to have examined all that was worth examination with care and attention. He observed, however, no method in his studies; his hours of attending the galleries were dictated by chance; and his mode of copying, by means of a delineator, enabled him to store away the works he liked at a cheap rate; his brethren called it mechanical and unartist-like—they might have added that he was stealing rather than acquiring. The hand of a master may trace by a mechanical process—that of a student must work, if it is to work to purpose, by the unaided eye. Barry *outlined* all the fine antique statues in this manner. The only copies in oil which he made were some few which he sent to Burke, and the only original pictures which he painted were the "Adam and Eve," and the "Philoctetes." He was, at this time, as slow and fastidious in his art, as he was rash and precipitate in his temper.

On his arrival in England, he was warmly welcomed by Burke; and the first picture which he exhibited was not unworthy of one who aspired to revive the faded lustre of historic painting. He measured himself at once with the most lovely of all Grecian productions, and painted "Venus Rising out of the Sea." This picture is allowed, by friends and foes, to be an exquisite one: but he painted it in vain; it excited no lively sympathy—no fresh emotion; the subject had been exhausted by sculptors and painters—by loftier minds and happier hands. It was received with cold approbation.[1] Having shown his skill in the graceful

[1] It obtained for him, however, his election as Associate of the Royal Academy, and in the following year he was made full Member. I have not been able to find out where the original of this picture now is, but his etching of "The Birth of Venus" gives one a sufficient idea of his treatment of this classical subject. Anything more unclassical and hideous it is difficult to conceive. Venus—an ugly, thickset doll—stands stiffly in an open scallop-shell held by a god, while three mermen, without the slightest expression of any kind on their faces, look on at the curious phenomenon. It is altogether a fearful and wonderful work.—Ed.

and lovely, he desired next to grapple with what is called the grand style, and painted his "Jupiter and Juno"—a work better conceived than executed, exhibiting much majesty of outline, and no little deficiency in colour. But what were Jupiter and Juno to the public of 1773? The great artists of Greece and Italy wrought in the spirit of their age and country; they sought at home for subjects of high character, yet familiarly known. But the heathen gods on Barry's canvas appealed to no popular sympathy—to no national belief—to no living superstition: the mob marvelled what they meant, and the learned had little to say.

Some kind and clever friend perceived this public apathy, and endeavoured to supply a stimulus in the "Morning Post." He classed the "Jupiter and Juno" with the high historical works, and claimed for Barry a large portion of the genius necessary for elevating British art. Of the great artists of Italy he says justly: "Poetry warmed their imagination; history informed them of facts, and philosophy taught them causes; they felt the uses derived from these studies, and knew that a more thorough knowledge only enables a man to think more justly. Possessed of great natural powers, and having thus cultivated them, they did not fearfully hesitate, and observe only through the medium of another man's prejudices, but boldly and independently exerted their own faculties—they made use of their own eyes to see—their own imaginations to conceive with, and were regulated by their own informed judgments—and fixed upon a ground so firm, their works were sublime, just, and original." But those great painters did one thing and Barry did another. They, like the Greeks before them, set their imaginations to work upon subjects for which there was a market—Religion called Art to her aid, and the most eloquent of Romish divines never illustrated her legends with the spirit and grandeur of this auxiliary. To this view of the subject, Barry obstinately shut his eyes, and fared accordingly. Those who disliked his "Jupiter and Juno," dwelt upon incorrect drawing and defective colouring. In a work appealing more directly to the public feeling, a work of half the talent would have obtained high praise.

The "Adam and Eve," which he painted in Italy and finished in London could not be objected to on these grounds. But the subject, simple as it seems, exacts more from art than art can readily bestow. To imagine two beings, new created and pure, and fresh from the hand of the Almighty fashioner, requires the "faculty divine" of a Milton; and to embody in lineament and colours this more than mortal vision, would ask the hand of a Raphael.[1] It was the misfortune of Barry to choose subjects of surpassing beauty, where success was the most difficult, and failure sure to be the most injurious.

We may guess how he felt on this somewhat cold reception of works which he had more than insinuated would bring back the antique art of historic painting amongst us. We know what he did—he left Olympus, and the bowers of Eden, and painted the "Death of Wolfe in the battle of Quebec." While he was busy with this picture, the whisper spread that he had seen the error of his ways, and, in short, forsaken classic severity of character, and poetic freedom of costume, for the actual faces and dresses of the day. It was at length finished and exhibited. A combat of naked men astonished the multitude, who knew all the regiments engaged, and the cut of their regimentals. It was neither a poetic interpretation of the fight, nor an historical illustration, but a sort of mixture of both, hastily conceived and indifferently executed, and only redeemed from contempt by the sentiment of heroism which triumphed in the looks of the expiring general. In subjects of a poetic nature, fancy may clothe as she pleases her own progeny; but in historic productions, the time and the people must be expressed. The soldiers of George II. might as well have been represented fighting those of Louis XV. on elephants' backs, as in the nakedness of the Lapithæ. Barry, who had shortly before been elected an Associate of the Royal Academy, was so much offended with the way in which this picture was hung or talked

[1] This work, the property of the Society of Arts, is now at South Kensington, where those who like can judge of it for themselves. I refrain from offering any criticism.—Ed.

about by his brethren that he never sent another work to their exhibition.

Poverty was now a sore enemy to his peace—the munificence of Burke maintained him at Rome, but now the means of life were to be raised by his pencil, and on nothing that his pencil produced had patronage as yet smiled. His parents, with whom his correspondence seems to have been but casual, were not in a condition to render him assistance. Dr. Sleigh, his early friend, was dead. The ungainliness of his manners, the caustic sharpness of his remarks, and his sudden resentments, repelled those who were willing to serve him. He listened to the good counsel of Burke with growing impatience—nor was he long in making even that friend of friends feel the fierceness of his nature.

He had always professed a strong aversion to portrait painting: some ascribed this to envy of Reynolds, others to his own want of skill in that line of art; and Dr. Brocklesby, wishing to break the spell, requested Burke to sit to Barry. Barry agreed; but he had his own peculiar notions of the etiquette to be observed in a painter's studio, and moreover was in a mood approaching to ill-humour with Burke for his intimacy with Reynolds. Burke called repeatedly to commence the sittings for his portrait, but pre-engagements were pleaded, and a day's notice was demanded—more as a matter of form, it would seem, than of necessity. His patience failed him, and he wrote the following letter:—"It has been very unfortunate for me that my time is so regularly occupied that I can never with certainty tell exactly beforehand when I shall be disengaged. I waited on you exactly at half an hour after eleven, and had the pleasure of finding you at home; but, as usual, so employed as not to permit you to undertake this disagreeable business. I have troubled you with this letter, as I think it necessary to make an excuse for so frequent and importunate intrusion. Much as it might flatter my vanity to be painted by so eminent an artist, I assure you that, knowing I had no title to that honour, it was only in compliance with the desire, often repeated, of our common friend, that I have been so troublesome."

It is to the honour of Barry that this letter touched him deeply. He disliked, indeed, its air of distant courtesy and its ironical tone, but Burke had been kind when friends were few and much needed, and he was unwilling to lose him, as well he might. "What am I to understand from all this," was his answer, "surely there must be something in your mind, what is it? I should be glad to know in its full extent, and permit me to say that I ought not to be left in ignorance of any matter that is likely to make a breach between us. As to Dr. Brocklesby's picture, it is a miserable subject to be made the ground of a quarrel with me. I will paint it, as I always was earnestly inclined to do, when I can get a sitting upon the terms that are granted to all other painters. I only begged the notice of a day beforehand, and you well know that much more is required by others, and from the very nature of the thing it must be evident that business cannot be carried on without it."

The reader may be curious to learn how such controversies are carried on between a touchy artist and a fastidious sitter. Burke again wrote to assure Barry that he had no wish to offend him, nor was it from any vanity that he desired to be painted, but merely to oblige Dr. Brocklesby. He had sat for his portrait five times—twice in little, and three times in large, and had always gone to the easel without giving previous notice. "A picture of me," he observed, "is now painting for Mr. Thrale, by Sir Joshua Reynolds, and in this manner, and in this only. I will not presume to say that the condescension of some men forms a rule for others. I know that extraordinary civility cannot be claimed as a matter of strict justice. In that view, possibly, you may be right. It is not for me to dispute with you. I have ever looked up with reverence to merit of all kinds, and have learned to yield submission even to the caprices of men of parts. I shall certainly obey your commands, and send you regular notice whenever I am able."

This idle and uncalled-for debate terminated creditably for both—in reconciliation and renewal of friendship. Barry was ashamed of his obstinacy, and Burke relented

towards one whom the world was not using according to his merits. The portrait, which caused the "angry parlé," was finished soon afterwards, and was considered a good likeness, and a skilful work. In this lucrative line of art, he might, no doubt, have obtained distinction, if he could have surmounted his reluctance to commence limner of the population at large. But the poetic feeling of Barry refused all sympathy with sordid looks and vulgar costume, and he was content to starve in the service of that Muse, who,

"With rapt soul sitting in her eyes,"

desired him to be daring, and to think only of lofty themes.

His next cabinet pictures—"Mercury inventing the Lyre," and "Narcissus admiring himself in the Water"—were much admired among the imaginative. The latter owed its existence to a conversation with his illustrious friend, during the sittings for his portrait. "On what works of fancy are you employed now?" said Burke. "On this little slight thing," said Barry, holding up the picture; "it is young Mercury inventing the Lyre. The god, you know, found a tortoise shell at break of day on the sea-shore, and fashioned it into a fine instrument of music." "I know the story," replied Burke, "such were the fruits of early rising—he is an industrious deity, and an example to man. I will give you a companion to it—Narcissus wasting time looking at himself in the fountain—an image of idleness and vanity." The Narcissus was painted, thrown aside, and lost—the Mercury is a sweet and classic production—perhaps one of the happiest of the painter's works. The god stands on the sea-shore, with the shell of a tortoise in his hand, listening to the sound which one of its extended fibres has emitted to the touch of his finger. The future instrument dawns upon his mind—and Cupid, inspired with the same thought, presents him with an additional string, which he has plucked from his bow.

The thoughts of Barry dwelt ever on magnificent undertakings, and he imagined that grandeur and sublimity

resided only in scenes of vast extent. He believed too that the Reformed as well as the Romish Church required the aid of art to illustrate its tenets, and animate its devotees —a dream in which the painters of the British school have persisted for a century. He heard, therefore, with undissembled joy, of the proposal to embellish the cathedral of Saint Paul, with paintings of a scriptural nature, corresponding in dimensions with its dome and its panels, and he hastened to offer his services, with the hope of seeing the splendour of the Sistine rivalled in London. He thus writes concerning it to the Duke of Richmond:—"The Dean and Chapter have agreed to leave the ornamenting of St. Paul's to the Academy, and it now rests with us to give permission to such painters as we shall think qualified to execute historical pictures of a certain size, I believe from fifteen to twenty feet high. We also intend to set up a monument there—Pope is mentioned—the sculptor is to be paid by subscription, and a benefit from the playhouse. I proposed this matter to the Academy about a year since, a little after my being admitted an associate, and I had long set my heart upon it, as the only means for establishing a solid manly taste for real art, in place of our contemptible passion for the daubing of inconsequential things, portraits of dogs, landscapes, &c.—things which the mind, which is the soul of art, having no concern in them, have hitherto served to disgrace us all over Europe." It is in his own house that the Englishman has set up the images which he loves to worship. The annual multitudes of paintings, all of a social and domestic character, which the Academy exhibits, are to be viewed with respect, since they bear witness to the general cultivation of home-bred happiness; but Barry regarded all such compositions as no better than unblushing indications of insular stupidity. He resolved to lend no countenance to this domestic heresy in art, and determined to endure every privation in the exaltation of his profession. "I have taken great pains," he said, "to fashion myself for this kind of Quixotism: to this end I have contracted and simplified my cravings and wants, and brought them into a very narrow compass." There is no doubt but he would have enjoyed all the luxury

of privation, had he painted a few twenty-feet square pictures for the cathedral of St. Paul's, since they were to be done at the proper cost, not of the church, but of the Academicians. The subject which Barry selected, was the Jews rejecting Christ when Pilate intreated his release—he probably made no progress in the sketch, and allowed the picture to lie embodied in his imagination till the sanction of the hierarchy should let his pencil loose.

The obstinacy of the Bishop of London, to which we have already alluded, made all this enthusiasm vain; and great and stormy was Barry's indignation.

While the project concerning St. Paul's was yet in suspense, he found time to execute his "Chiron and Achilles," a work of classical beauty and simplicity—which was purchased by Mr. Palmer at the singular rate of twenty guineas *per figure*. This mechanical mode of calculation seems to have been the artist's own invention, for in a letter to the Duke of Richmond, concerning a picture which his grace had commissioned, there occurs the following characteristic passage:—"My finances are pretty low at present; therefore, if your grace should think proper to send me any part of the price of the picture, it would come very opportunely. I count upon six figures in it, and I had twenty guineas a figure for the picture I sold to Mr. Palmer, of Chiron and Achilles." The answer of the nobleman is in keeping with Barry's letter:—"If I recollect right," said his grace, "the picture of Stratonice has but four capital figures in it, the other two being only companions; however, I do not mean to value the picture by the number of figures. On the other side of this paper I send you a draft on my banker for a hundred guineas, which I should hope you will think a sufficient price for the picture; but if you do not, I will immediately send you another draft for twenty more." How this controversy concluded, I can find no account—probably unfavourably for the pocket of the painter.

When the Bishop of London at length rejected the offer of the Royal Academy, it occurred to the Society for the Encouragement of Arts, Manufactures, and Commerce, that they might avail themselves of this spirit of liberality,

and have their rooms at the Adelphi covered by the surplus talent of the land, free of all expense. The passions of the painters, like those of the poet, seemed raging like so many devils to get vent in historic composition, and Valentine Green, the Secretary of the Society, was authorized to open the doors of the great rooms of the Adelphi for their accommodation: but ere this happened the Academy had taken another view of the matter, and they refused the offer. Barry, whose hopes had been raised high, was deeply grieved at this second disappointment; he imagined that he saw in it the extinction of all his dreams, and that the grand historic style had bowed its supremacy for ever before that domestic idol, portraiture. Having failed in painting the nation into a love of the historic art, he resolved to make a last effort, and, if possible, write them into it:—and hence his "Inquiry into the Real and Imaginary Obstructions to the Progress of Art in England."

A work of this sort had been long in his fancy. It was suggested while he was at Rome by the ignorant taunts of foreigners, that the genius of the British isles was too cold for works of fine imagination. Talent had been set down in the strange theories of Montesquieu and Winkelmann as the product of latitude, and the ardent fancy and delicacy of feeling which went to the composition of noble works, were compared to vines, which, producing rich, large, and luscious clusters in the sunny vales of France and Italy, yield only small, sour, and starveling bunches in the cold, moist climate of England. The "Inquiry" of Barry had a twofold purpose: the refutation of these visionaries, and a vindication of his own theory, that art, before it could be honourable to England, required to devote itself fully to historic composition.

His answer to Winkelmann was triumphant, if the victory which common sense obtains over absurdity can be called a triumph. He refused all help from scientific reasoning, and proved, by the evidence of history, that whatever influence the sun might have on the fruits of the earth, the rise, the glory, and degradation of nations had come from moral causes, in which neither climate nor

season had any share. In Greece the warmth of the sun was ever the same, and the recurrence of the seasons also; corn, wine, and oil, all excellent in their kinds, had been produced during all periods, and are now produced, yet the fine arts are extinguished, and national capacity gone. If Greece had her day of glory, the same had happened to modern Italy—her long line of illustrious artists had come to an end; yet the land yielded as richly as ever its annual crop of fruit. Having crushed the principle on which this exclusive system of genius is founded, he handled with indignant vigour the insulting inference that the capacity of England was unequal to high art. He claimed superiority for the British in works of mental grandeur and loftiness of imagination, and pointed out Spenser, and Shakespeare, and Milton, as abounding in the finest pictures, and in the noblest and loveliest images of beauty.

Of a work, which may be considered as the first literary production of the Royal Academy, the offspring of a mind full of knowledge, and animated by more than common enthusiasm, it may be proper to transcribe some specimens. "It is a misfortune (says Barry) never entirely to be retrieved, that painting was not suffered to grow up amongst us at the same time with poetry and the other arts and sciences, whilst the genius of the nation was yet forming its character in strength, beauty, and refinement: it would have received a strength and a polish, and it would, in its turn, have given to our poetry a greater perfection in one of its master-features, in which, Milton and Spenser excepted, it is rather somewhat defective. But the nation is now formed, and perhaps more than formed, and there is cause to fear that it may be too late to expect the last degree of perfection in the arts, from what we are now likely to produce in an age when, perhaps, frothy affectations, and modish, corrupt, silly opinions of foreign as well as of domestic growth, have but too generally taken place of that masculine vigour and purity of taste so necessary both for the artist and for his employer. Let us suppose ever so many fortunate circumstances to concur in leading an artist into such a tract of study, among old stones and old canvas, as that he may be able to assimilate the

pure, rigid, beautiful, simple taste of the Greeks and the old Italians with his own substance and observations on nature; yet afterwards, if he should unfortunately happen to find that the era of those qualities has either not arrived, or is long since passed away, amongst the people who are, generally speaking, to be his employers, and that they have but little of that grandeur of idea and elevation of mind which will encourage him in the pursuit of extraordinary things, what is he to do? His great advantages over meaner artists will infallibly lie by, mouldering away through disease, and he must content himself with a contest of little value, mere matters of execution."

He laments, like a greater man, that he has come an hour too late, and fallen on evil and ignorant times, when common transcripts of nature and fine colours were triumphing over historic art; and he imputes the discouragement of native works of genius to the admiration of all that is of foreign growth—to the ignorant enthusiasm of the rich, who, while pouring out their money and their praise on the rubbish and offal of the easel, devoutly believed they were buying and worshipping Raphael, Titian, and Correggio. His words are strong, and near the truth: "Artful men, both at home and abroad, have not failed to avail themselves of this passion for ancient art, as it afforded a fine coverlet for imposition—for vending in the names of those great masters, the old copies, imitations, and studies of all the obscure artists that have been working in Italy, Flanders, and other places for two hundred years past. These things are to be had in great plenty, and may be, as I have often known at Rome, baptized 'first thoughts,' 'second thoughts, with alterations,' 'duplicates,' and what not. It would be endless to give an account of all the various ways in which our antiquaries and picture-dealers, both at home and abroad, carry on the business of imposition. The Pope and the States of Venice, and other Italian communities, have set their seals upon all pictures worth keeping, and not one can be moved by means of either persuasion or bribery. This ill-fated country of ours is, therefore, crammed with nothing but rubbish from abroad, and our artists at home must neces-

sarily, to avoid risking the displeasure of their patrons, favour this mockery and cheat put upon them. The absurd abuse of our love of art is the disgrace of our country and age; it has long lain like a dead weight upon the loins of national improvement."

The audacious honesty of this eminent man conspired against his success in art: he talked and wrote down the impressions of his pencil. Having satirized the great dry-nurses of British art, whose cold and ungenial bosoms froze infant excellence to death, he thus handles the living painters themselves: "There are, to be sure, but few artists whose personal interests happen to be embarked in the same bottom with the dignity of the art, and consequently with the interests of the public, but there are a few; and as for the many, who have no part in this exertion of superior art, they ought in conscience to content themselves with the greater profits which in this commercial country must ever follow the practice of the lower branches, especially as they cannot expect to keep up for ever the false weight and importance which they have assumed in consequence of those greater gettings. It is, therefore, to be hoped that they will no longer find it practicable to play the part of the dog in the manger as they have hitherto done, for, indeed, a great many of the blocks and impediments thrown in the way of superior art, have been owing to the secret workings and machinations of those interested men."

All this added new enemies to the old; nor am I sure that Barry's limited theory of excellence in art is at all just. Scenes of historic or religious grandeur ought no more to retain the exclusive monopoly of the pencil than of the pen. The poetry of the nation has given an echo to every cord of feeling. The love of woman, and the courage of man, look hardly less beautiful in the minstrel's humble song than in the loftiest epic. We grow satiated with the clangour of the trumpet, and long for the breathing of the lute; and were the whole earth planted with roses of Sharon and lilies of the valley, such is the desire of human nature for variety that we would grow weary of walking amidst perfume, and sigh for the thistle and the

daisy, the harebell and the heather. The monotony which the artist recommends, though a monotony of excellence, would tire us at last. We would long for humbler things —for scenes in which all could sympathize—for fireside looks and familiar faces.

Having disposed of all inferior painters, cunning connoisseurs, and tricky antiquarians, he turned to the religion of the land with some bitterness. "Where religion," says he, "is affirmative and extended, it gives a loose and an enthusiasm to man's fancy, which throws a spirit into the air and manners, and stamps a diversity, life-quickness, sensibility, and expressive significance over everything they do. In another place, religion is more negative and contented: being formed in direct opposition to the first, its measures are regulated accordingly; much pains are taken to root out and remove everything that gives wing to the imagination, and so to regulate the outward man by a torpid, inanimate composure, gravity, and indifference, that it may attend to nothing but the mere acts of necessity, everything else being reputed idle and vain. Men so formed had as few words as buttons; the tongue spoke almost without moving the lips; and the circumstances of a murder were related with as little emotion as an ordinary mercantile transaction. Some kinds of religion appear to be the graves of art, of genius, of sensibility, and of all the finer and more spiritual parts of the human faculties: other religions have been the nurse and the mother of them; they have embraced all the arts; poetry, painting, music, architecture, and every effort of ingenuity were employed in giving a force and a furtherance to their views."

Barry looked upon the Pope as a President, and upon the Romish church as the Queen of Academies. To an ardent proselyte of the Catholic system, painting appeared a lawful auxiliary; and as an artist he was willing to believe it a most efficient one; but he spoke like a painter, though he spoke with much knowledge, for he had considered every subject which art either aids or adorns.

Dissertations on the fine arts were uncommon; popular affection had not been so fully awakened as to enable the

multitude to understand and feel the importance of this memorable work. It had the repulsive aspect of a controversial treatise; and was coldly received by all, save a coterie of artists and antiquarians, who were stung by its satiric energy. I am afraid I must impute to this production, in some degree at least, the ultimate estrangement of his best and greatest friend. It was no longer "My dear Barry," and your "faithful friend, Edmund Burke;" correspondence was carried on through the frosty medium of the third person, and there was now no overflowing warmth either of affection or advice. A sort of diplomatic civility took the place of kindness; and Barry had to learn the melancholy task of addressing an old and tried friend in the language of mere acquaintance. To continue on intimate terms with one so fierce of nature, it was necessary to become his partisan: he expected those who loved him should share his griefs, and resent whatever he thought worthy of resentment. To become Barry's friend was like being a second in a duel of old, when both principals and seconds drew their swords and fought the quarrel out. Into disputes with a rich and influential body of men, Burke was likely to be slow in precipitating himself: he felt that his friend Reynolds was a sufferer from the pen and tongue of Barry, and he was glad to retire to such a distance as gave him the power to remain neuter in these unhappy contests. Intercourse, both personally and by letter, continued between them: it never more resumed the affectionate cordiality of earlier years.

A gradual change had taken place both in the person and the temper of Barry. He neglected his dress, lived sullenly and alone, and held intercourse with few of those men who influence the fame and fortune of artists. He seemed ever in a reverie, out of which he was unwilling to be roused. The history of his life is the tale of splendid works contemplated and seldom begun; of theories of art, exhibiting the confidence of genius and learning; and of a constant warfare, waged against a coterie of connoisseurs, artists, and antiquarians, who ruled the realm of taste. The high distinction which he claimed, as follower of the grand style, rendered it necessary, he imagined, that he

should vindicate his title. To think and to act were matters of the same moment with one so enthusiastic. He determined to offer his pencil to the Society of Arts; and applied for permission to adorn their great room with a series of historical paintings, all from his own hand, and wholly at his own expense. When he made this magnificent offer, he had but sixteen shillings in his pocket, and was aware that, if it were accepted, he must have to steal time from sleep to supply him with the means of life. He was willing to lie hard, live mean, and dress coarsely, with the hope of being heard of hereafter: he was truly one of those ardent spirits who hunger and thirst after distinction, and whom the narrow and the sordid reproach, as idle dreamers and fantastic enthusiasts. "I thought myself bound (he says) in duty to the country, to art, and to my own character, to try whether my abilities would enable me to exhibit the proof as well as the argument." The Society gave prompt permission: he stipulated for nothing but the free exercise of his own judgment, free admission at all times to his undertaking, and that the necessary models should be provided for him without expense.

He had now "ample room and verge enough" to exhaust his powers of imagination, and exhibit all his knowledge and skill. The subject which he selected for illustration was "Human Improvement," presenting a succession of varied pictures of society. He divided the whole into six compartments. "We begin," said the artist, describing his own conceptions, "with man in a savage state, full of inconvenience, imperfection, and misery, and we follow him through several gradations of culture and happiness, which, after our probationary state here, are finally attended with beatitude or misery. The first is the 'Story of Orpheus;' the second, 'A Harvest Home, or Thanksgiving to Ceres and Bacchus;' the third, 'The Victors at Olympia;' the fourth, 'Navigation, or the Triumph of the Thames;' the fifth, 'The Distribution of Premiums in the Society of Arts;' and the sixth, 'Elysium, or the State of Final Retribution.' Three of these subjects are poetical; the others historical." He commenced these works in 1777,

and finished them in 1783.[1] A short description may not be unacceptable.

The first picture represents Orpheus as the founder of Grecian civilization, uniting in one character the legislator, divine, philosopher, poet, and musician. He stands in a wild and savage country, surrounded by people as uncultivated as their soil, to whom, as messenger of the gods, he is pouring out his song of instruction, accompanied by the music of the lyre. The hearers of this celestial delegate are armed with clubs, and clad in the skins of wild beasts; they have courage and strength, by which they subdue lions and tigers; but they want wisdom for their own protection and for that of their offspring. In illustration of this a matron is seen, at a little distance from the door of her hut, milking a goat, while her children are about to become the prey of a lion; two horses are run down by a tiger; and a damsel, carrying a dead fawn, leans on the shoulder of her male companion. "I wished to glance," said the painter, "at a matter often observed by travellers, which is, that the value and estimation of women increase according to the growth and cultivation of society, and that amongst savage nations they are in a condition little better than the beasts of burden." In the distance, Ceres descends on the world; and by the side of Orpheus lie paper, an egg, a bound lamb, and materials for sacrifice.

The second piece exhibits a dance of youths and maidens round the terminal figure of Pan. On one side appears the father of the harvest feast, with a white staff or rustic

[1] "I began the work here exhibited in July, 1777," he writes in his pamphlet; "and although I was without patron, fortune, or encouragement, without wages to subsist on, and with no other assistance to carry it on than what I was to derive from any other occasional works that might fall in my way,—with only these to rely on, and with a clear foresight of the many vexatious delays and difficulties that would naturally happen, as well as of the underhand, malevolent attentions from a certain quarter [he meant the Royal Academy, with which he had already quarrelled] which had continually followed me, and which I well knew would not be wanting industriously to embroil and embitter matters on this occasion; yet I have to thank God for it that, in the main, the work went on pleasantly enough."—Ed.

sceptre in his hand, accompanied by his wife; on the other is a group of peasants, carousing amid rakes and ploughs, and fruits and flowers; while behind the whole, two oxen are seen drawing a load of corn to the threshing-floor. Ceres, Bacchus, and Pan overlook from the clouds this scene of innocent festivity. A farm-house, with all its indoor and out-door economy is there. Love, too, and marriage mingle in the scene; children abound; rustic games are not forgotten; and aged men repose on the ground, applauding sports in which they can no longer participate.

The third picture—the crowning of the victors in the Olympian games—shows the judges seated on a throne, bearing the likenesses of Solon, Lycurgus, and other legislators, and trophies of Salamis, Marathon, and Thermopylæ. Before them pass the victors crowned; people are crowding to look on them. The heroes, poets, sages, and philosophers of Greece are present. Pindar leads the chorus; Hiero, of Syracuse, follows in his chariot; Diagoras, the Rhodian, is borne round the stadium on the shoulders of his victorious sons; Pericles is seen speaking to Cimon; while Socrates, Anaxagoras, and Euripides listen, and Aristophanes laughs and scoffs.

The fourth piece descends to modern times, and the scene is laid at home. The Thames triumphs in the presence of Drake, Raleigh, Cabot, and Cook. Mercury, as Commerce, accompanies them; and Nereïds are carrying articles of manufacture and industry. Some of these demi-celestial porters are more sportivè than laborious, and others still more wanton than sportive. As music is connected closely with all matters of joy and triumph, Burney, the composer, accompanies Drake and Raleigh, and cheers them with his instrument.

The fifth picture is a meeting of the members of the Society of Arts, discoursing on the manufactures, commerce, and liberal pursuits of the country, and distributing the annual premiums. It is an assemblage of the chief promoters of the institution, male and female, with the gratuitous addition of Johnson and Burke.[1]

[1] This forms a marvellous anti-climax. From Orpheus singing to his lyre, to George IV. distributing the prizes of the Society of Arts!

The sixth picture is a view of Elysium. Mental Culture conducts to Piety and Virtue, and Piety and Virtue are rewarded by Immortal Happiness. In a picture forty-two feet long, the artist had room for the admission of many of the great and the good of all nations. Greece and Rome, France, Italy, and England, supplied him largely; and he has endeavoured to bring together the chief of their distinguished sons in one connected group, over which a splendour is shed from between the wings of angels.[1]

Those who have examined these extraordinary works will hardly dispute that the artist grappled with a subject too varied, complicated, and profound for the pencil. The moral grandeur of the undertaking, and the historical

Could there be further progression? Even the background of this picture has its significance. In it Barry has introduced a view of the interior of St. Paul's, decorated with his own sketch of the "Fall of Lucifer," with which he had proposed to adorn that edifice. Culture might even have reached so far had this work been permitted to the artist.—Ed.

[1] Of this vast work it is difficult to speak, for one cannot help feeling as though its great aim ought to silence criticism of its defective execution. To read the description of "this sublime picture," as given in the octavo pamphlet which was sold in the room at the time of the exhibition, one would imagine that human genius had never before attained to such a height; but when one comes to compare the description with the painting the whole seems one intricate puzzle which the written key only makes the more difficult. When Archimedes, Galileo, Sir Isaac Newton, "regarding with awe and admiration a solar system," are jumbled with Columbus, Lord Shaftesbury, Marcus Brutus, William Molyneux, Aristotle, Zeno, Harvey, Alfred the Great leaning on the shoulder of Penn, Trajan and Edward the Black Prince, Charles I., Lord Arundel, Molière, Homer, Pope, Mendelssohn, Sir Christopher Wren, Rubens, Hogarth, Apelles, Raphael, Dürer, Giotto, and a hundred others, taken as it seems at first in the same wild haphazard, it is difficult to understand the "order of their going." Yet the catalogue assures us that there is a method in all this seeming madness, and that from the "system of systems at the top of the picture, where the fixed stars, considered as so many suns each with his several planets, are revolving round the Great Cause, and cherubim veiled with their wings are offering incense to that invisible and incomprehensible Power," to the somewhat grotesque and mediæval rendering of Tartarus or Hell, all has its meaning and due harmony, and serves to teach that "man's present and future happiness, individual as well as public, depends on the cultivation and proper direction of the human faculties." High doctrine, but better taught, as one learns from these gigantic failures, by simpler means.—Ed.

associations which it awakened, together with the room which it afforded for the display of imagination, imposed upon the ardent and indiscriminating Barry, and he probably began

"With desperate charcoal round the darken'd walls"

of the Adelphi, in the belief that the subject would unfold and brighten upon him by degrees. But the sunrise of knowledge, and the full day of art and science, involved discoveries and inventions which painting could not well find shape nor colour to express. The fault of the work lies in the subject: he that runs cannot read, and he who reads cannot always understand. The description, by Barry's own pen, opens the secret somewhat: without it these six pictures, instead of presenting one continual story—simple in conception and unembarrassed in detail—would appear like so many splendid riddles. The *grand style* (which our artist thought to revive) is the simplest of all, and can be comprehended without comment.

That Jonas Hanway left a guinea instead of a shilling, for his admission to see the Adelphi pictures—that Johnson beheld "a grasp of mind in them which he could find nowhere else"—and that Townley declared they were "composed upon the true principles of the best paintings," are sayings and doings sufficiently notorious, and which have had and will have their weight with the world. Nay, Lord Aldborough wrote to the artist such praise as I am half afraid to transcribe. "When I return to town, I shall again and again visit these unequalled performances; they will stand the comparison of the past and the test of future ages for originality of design, instruction, colouring, energy and disposition of figure, and judgment and success in the invention and execution. You have taken in all the perfections, combined all the qualities of Raphael, Titian, Guido, and the most celebrated artists of the Grecian and Roman schools; and your literary works prove that you possess all the liberal arts as well as painting; and reflect equal honour on the age we live in, as shame on this country for the want of due encouragement. My house and fortune are at your service till your fortune equal your

abilities." 'I know not what answer was returned to this splendid offer.

On those six pictures Barry spent six years—instead of three, which he had originally contemplated—a miscalculation that involved him in many difficulties, out of which he strove to extricate himself by uncommon frugality,[1] self-denial, and labour during the periods he should have reserved for repose. He gave his day to the Adelphi, and much of his night to hurried drawings and hasty engravings, by the profits of which he sustained life. "He has recorded some of his prints," says Dr. Fryer, "as done at this time—such as his 'Job,' 'Birth of Venus,' 'Head of Lord Chatham,' 'King Lear.' Many lighter things were done at the pressure of the moment, and never owned." During the progress of the work he began to perceive, and perhaps to feel, the approaches of want; and to keep this adversary of genius at bay, he applied to Sir George Saville—a leading member of the Society of Arts—to communicate his situation to his brethren, and by a small subscription enable him to exist till he had finished the undertaking. The appeal was in vain. Nay, he experienced some difficulty in obtaining that allowance for models and colours for which he had expressly stipulated, and was subjected to the official insolence of the acting secretary. The Society afterwards reflected that it would be injurious to allow a man to starve whom they might have to bury, and they accordingly kept his soul and body together—first, by two donations of fifty guineas each, and the gift of a gold medal, and, lastly, two hundred guineas at the conclusion of the work.

That Barry was very proud of his performance may be easily believed. "It will be exceedingly hard," he says, in his celebrated letter to the Dilettanti Society, "if the benefit of the laws should be withheld from the painter of such a work as that on Human Culture; which, for public interest and ethical utility of subject—for the castigated purity of Grecian design—for beauty, grace, vigorous effect

[1] He told Blake that while he was painting these pictures he lived chiefly on bread and apples.—ED.

and execution—stands so successfully in the view and neighbourhood of the so justly celebrated Orleans collection." There were many to smile at the absurdities of some parts of the Six Pictures, who could not feel the depth of mind which sought to unite them into one harmonious whole. To see the River Thames carried by Tritons, and Dr. Burney in the costume of the year 1778 playing a tune to Drake and Raleigh, excited laughter. "I am by no means pleased," said a Dowager, putting her fan before her face, "to see good Dr. Burney with a parcel of naked girls dabbling in a horse-pond." A young lady from the north, of great beauty and wit, went to take a look at the painter's Elysium. She looked earnestly for a while, and said to Mr. Barry, "The ladies have not yet arrived in this Paradise of yours." "O, but they have, madam," said the painter, with a smile; "they reached Elysium some time ago; but I could find no place so fit for creatures so bright and beautiful as behind yon very luminous cloud—they are there, and very happy, I assure you."

As a relief from the toil of this extensive work, he took up his pen, and in a long and able description and dissertation maintained the excellence both of the subject he had chosen, and the way in which he had handled it. This performance, amidst all its knowledge and eloquence, has a strong infusion of bitter feeling; the allusions to those who grow rich and important in pursuing the more sordid branches of art, are frequent and sharp. "Mr. Barry's exhibition," writes Dr. Johnson, "was opened the same day, and a book was published to recommend it, which, if you read, you will find decorated with some satirical strictures of Sir Joshua Reynolds and others. I have not escaped. You must think with some esteem of Barry for the comprehension of his design." These sarcasms of Barry produced a letter bearing in every line the mental impress of Edmund Burke; it was universally ascribed to his pen, though to this moment unacknowledged. The imagination, the vigour of thought, the varied knowledge and skill of hand which the six pictures displayed, are at the outset admitted; and then the critic quits the canvas

to fall sharply upon the dissertation. Barry had spoken with levity or irreverence of the art of portrait-painting; he had drawn a distinction between the poetic and the merely imitative, which separated them as far as the south is from the north. Burke urges the propriety of uniting both in historic composition, thus:—

"Without the power of combining and abstracting, the most accurate knowledge of forms and colours will produce only uninteresting trifles; but without any accurate knowledge of forms and colours, the most happy power of combining and abstracting will be absolutely useless; for there is no faculty of the mind which can bring its energy into effect unless the memory be stored with ideas for it to work upon. These ideas are the materials of invention, which is only a power of combining and abstracting, and which, without such materials, would be in the same state as a painter without canvas, boards, and colours. Experience is the only means of acquiring ideas of any kind, and continued observation and study upon one class of objects the only way of rendering them accurate. The painter who wishes to make his picture what fine pictures must be—nature elevated and improved—must first of all gain a perfect knowledge of nature as it is. Before he endeavours, like Lysippus, to make men as they ought to be, he must know how to render them as they are; he must acquire an accurate knowledge of all parts of their body and countenance. To know anatomy will be of little use, unless physiology and physiognomy are joined with it, so that the artist may know what peculiar combinations and proportions of feature constitute different characters, and what effect the passions and affections of the mind have upon those features. This is a science which all the theorists in the world cannot teach, and which can only be acquired by observation, practice, and attention. It is not by copying antique statues, or by giving a loose to the imagination in what are called poetical compositions, that artists will be enabled to produce works of real merit, but by a laborious and accurate investigation of nature upon the principles observed by the Greeks—first, to make themselves thoroughly acquainted with the common forms

of nature, and then, by selecting and combining, to form compositions according to their own elevated conceptions. This is the principle of true poetry, as well as of painting and sculpture."

The ease and elegance with which these important truths are expressed will be felt by many who are not perhaps aware that it was the theory, as it was the practice of Barry, to extract all that is noble in art from all that is elevated in nature. The shafts of his satire were directed against the regular manufacturers of portraits; but he nowhere insinuates that imagination may fly its own free flight, or that poetic art is anything else than purified nature. He endeavours to distinguish between painters who can counterfeit only such faces as live before them, and those of the higher order, described so well by Sir Philip Sydney, "who, having no law but wit, bestow that in colours upon you which is fittest for the eye to see—as the constant, though lamenting look of Lucretia, when she punished in herself another's fault; wherein he painteth not Lucretia—whom he never saw—but painteth the outward beauty of such a virtue." It was the fashion of the day to claim the honours of historical art for portraiture, and Burke's letter could not be unacceptable to Reynolds, whose practice the Dissertation of Barry was obviously designed to impeach.

Penny, Professor of Painting, dying in 1782, Barry was elected in his place; and as this elevation happened during the intensest period of his labour upon the Six Pictures, he was unable for nearly two years to prepare a proper course of Lectures—the man who had to work ten hours a day for fame, and four hours for bread, was not likely to have much time to spare for works of advice or instruction. Reynolds, as President, made some allusion to this unseemly delay on the part of the new Professor: he was answered with great asperity by the imprudent Barry: "If I had no more to do in the course of my Lectures than produce such poor mistaken stuff as your Discourses, I should soon have them ready for reading." It is reported that these intemperate words were uttered with his fist clenched, and in a posture of menace.

At length, on the second day of March, 1784, he delivered his first lecture on painting. Much was looked for from his knowledge and talents; and the audience was very numerous and very attentive. Barry's manner was eager, his utterance impressive, and, on the whole, expectation was not disappointed.

Of these Lectures he delivered six: they embrace all that is included in the word Art, and discuss with abundance of boldness the threefold mystery of conception, composition, and colour. They are the echo of his letters and of his conversation: their one great object being to impress on the minds of the students the utter vanity of all art below the historical. As literary compositions they exhibit neither strict propriety of expression, nor perfect development of thought; but these defects are far more than atoned for by an earnest feeling for whatever is noble in art, and that readiness of illustration which can only arise from extensive and matured knowledge and rapid apprehension. They are throughout deformed by sarcastic allusions to modern works and living artists. Barry was a man of severe deportment, who seldom smiled, and conceived a jest beneath the dignity of human nature; his sarcastic remarks, therefore, were expressed and uttered with a deep and cutting air of solemnity—"he placed his life," as the poet says, "in the wound." The turbulent, uneasy, fierce temper of the man was ever and anon breaking out—nor is it possible to deny that envy was occasionally the inspiration of his periods. His Lectures spared few of his more successful brethren, and could not, therefore, be expected to pass over the President himself, who was observed, it is said, to avoid the pelting of the storm of invective by moving the trumpet from his ear, and even seeking refuge in a real or pretended nap. Of those ungracious allusions Reynolds often complained, and sarcastically excused his frequent nodding by saying that he fell asleep *only* at the personalities. Nor did Barry himself in after-life look back upon them with pleasure. "Sir Joshua, to say the truth," he observed (but this was when Sir Joshua was no more), "acted somewhat weakly with respect to me; and, on the other side, I was much to blame

with respect to him. My notions of candour and liberality between artists who were friends were too juvenile and romantic for human frailty in the general occurrences of life. Disappointed in not finding more in Sir Joshua, I was not then in a humour to make a just estimate of the many shining qualities I might have really found in him."

Critics were not wanting who found personalities in his paintings as well as in his lectures. In the emaciated limb which belongs to the *garter* of one whom he precipitates into Tartarus in the Adelphi Paintings, some one detected the noticeable leg of a nobleman who had given grievous offence to the artist. He defended himself with warmth. "What I particularly valued in my work," he said, "was a dignity, seriousness, and gravity infinitely removed from all personality." As he had admitted his friends freely to the joys of Elysium, it continued to be supposed that he was very capable of pushing his enemies as unceremoniously into Tartarus.

Barry thought so well of the Adelphi Series that he resolved to engrave them, and accordingly began to etch them on copper with his own hand.[1] But he was unequal to an undertaking which required nice delicacy of finish; and his subscribers were astonished when the rough offspring of his graver were put into their hands. They had expected something, probably, superior to the works of mere engravers; and one of them expressed surprise at the coarseness of the workmanship. "Pray, sir," said Barry, "can you tell me what you did expect?" "More finished engravings, sir," was the answer. Nollekens recommended them to his patrons, and these were not few; but Barry was not always disposed to be thankful for acts of kindness. The sculptor, a blunt, straightforward man, without any sense of delicacy, offended the painter's pride by call-

[1] His engravings, of which there is a good collection in various states at the British Museum, are powerful and unhesitating, but careless and coarse in execution. His work upon them involved sheer manual labour, for they were so large that, instead of placing them on a board, he used to sit in cobbler fashion, holding them on his lap and digging into the metal with all his strength. His friend Dixon found him in this attitude once, breathing like a paviour between every stroke.—Ed.

ing out in the presence of others, "Well, Jem, I have been very successful for you this week—I have got you three more subscribers for your prints." Barry bade him, with an oath, mind his own affairs; if the nobility wanted his engravings they knew where he was to be found. The six engravings were finished in 1792; all the impressions were taken with his own hand from a press erected on purpose.

The Society of Arts had indulged him with two exhibitions of his paintings, which yielded in clear profit five hundred pounds; to this sum he added two hundred pounds more, the produce of his engravings; and to astonish his friends, make his enemies stare, and show that his good sense had survived every vicissitude of fortune and controversy, he placed the money in the funds, and secured to himself an income of sixty pounds a year. It ought not to be omitted that Lord Romney gave him one hundred guineas for a portrait copied into one of the Six Pictures; that Timothy Hollis left one hundred pounds to "the Painter of the work upon Human Culture in the Adelphi;" and that Lord Radnor presented him with fifty pounds, made payable in a cheque to the bearer, out of respect to the sensitive feelings of the artist. He always, too, remembered the kindness of the Prince of Wales, who honoured him with several sittings, and spoke to him with a courtesy to which he had not been much accustomed.

Those works secured him fame, and bread at least, if not entire independence; but the professorship of painting, a place of dignity, and which none could fill more worthily, became to him a source of sorrow and misfortune. Historical painting was the divinity he professed to worship, but controversy was the false saint at whose shrine he offered up repose of mind, social happiness, and the best friendships he had formed. The period of his professorship was one of continual bickering and personal dispute. Whatever he imagined could be useful to the Academy he proposed without scruple; whatever he proposed he urged with vehemence; contradiction he regarded as insult, and repaid with invective. Nor did the heat excited in the council-room cool out of doors. Like the anxious wife in

the "Poet's Tale," Barry "nursed his wrath to keep it warm;" and at the next meeting took his seat only to resume his vituperation. Unwearied sarcasm and ever hot invective will exhaust mortal patience in the upshot; reverence for genius and respect for honesty of purpose will subside when they cannot be enjoyed in peace; and the man who regularly invades our repose, we will rejoice to get rid of at last, though in genius he approached the gods. Barry's great object was to appropriate the receipts of the Academy exhibitions to the formation of a gallery of the Old Masters; Reynolds was anxious to devote them to the purchase of his *own* fine collection of foreign paintings for the use of the students—propositions which might have been reconciled, but which alarmed those who desired to employ the money in defraying the studies of young artists in Italy, and displeased others who watched over the increasing revenue with the vigilance of dragons from the mere sordid wish of seeing it accumulate. From the love of gain, of art, or of contradiction, the members obliged neither, and disobliged both. Of these remarkable men, the Academy renounced one, and the other renounced the Academy; yet they most cordially disliked each other. "If there be a man on earth," said the President to Bacon, the sculptor, "whom I seriously dislike, it is that Barry."

Those whom the fame of his works, and the rumours of his open warfare with a man of such note as Reynolds, attracted to his study, were struck with the squalid aspect of his establishment, and his utter disregard of the advantages of dress. When at Rome, we have it settled to a painful certainty that he wore a gold-laced hat; and there is no reason to doubt but that the rest of his dress corresponded—but how unlike the enthusiast of the Sistine was the enthusiast of the Adelphi! His dress was coarse and mean; this arose partly from affectation, but not wholly so. His income was small and uncertain, and he was too proud and honest to dress fashionably at the expense of others. The man who contests the matter with fortune, will sometimes be worsted; and we must pity, not blame the consequences of such distress. That he was never

rich, there can be no doubt; but that he was never in want is also certain; and it is very probable that he flattered himself with thinking that men would say as he passed by, "That is Barry, the restorer of the antique spirit in art, and the painter of the Six Pictures in the Adelphi. See how coarsely he is clad, and how careless he is," and that he would be honoured more for the breach than the observance of custom in such matters.

His residence in Castle Street, though wearing a decent exterior when he took possession, soon corresponded in look with the outward man of its master.[1] The worst inn's worst room, in which the poet places the expiring Villiers, was equalled, if not surpassed, by that in which Barry slept, ate, and meditated in perfect satisfaction and security. His own character and whole system of indoor economy, were exhibited in a dinner he gave Mr. Burke. No one was better acquainted with the singular manners of this very singular man than the great statesman; he wished, however, to have ocular demonstration how he managed his household concerns in the absence of wife or servant, and requested to be asked to dinner. "Sir," said Barry, with much cheerfulness, "you know I live alone; but if you will come and help me to eat a steak, I shall have it tender and hot, and from the most classic market in London—that of Oxford." The day and the hour came, and Burke arriving at No. 36, Castle Street, found Barry ready to receive him. He was conducted into the painting room, which had undergone no change since it was a carpenter's shop. On one of the walls hung his large picture of Pandora, and round it were placed the studies of the Six Pictures of the Adelphi. There were likewise old straining-frames, old sketches, a printing press with which he printed his plates with his own hand. The labours, too, of the spider abounded, and rivalled in extent and colour pieces of old tapestry.

Burke saw all this, yet wisely seemed to see it not. He

[1] Pasquin, in his "Memoirs of the Royal Academicians," says that grass grew on his threshold between every stone, and "that vagrant heifers from Oxford Market used to come and browse upon this herbage;" but this must have been an exaggeration.—Ed.

observed, too, that most of the windows were broken or cracked; that the roof, which had no ceiling, admitted the light through many crevices in the tiling, and that two old chairs and a deal table composed the whole of the furniture. The fire was burning brightly, the steaks were put on to broil, and Barry, having spread a clean cloth on the table, put a pair of tongs in the hands of Burke, saying, "Be useful, my dear friend, and look to the steaks till I fetch the porter." Burke did as he was desired. The painter soon returned with the porter in his hand, exclaiming, "What a misfortune! the wind carried away the fine foaming top as I crossed Titchfield Street." They sat down together. The steak was tender, and done to a moment; the artist was full of anecdote; and Burke often declared that he never spent a happier evening in his life. Such is the story which has been often written and often repeated, and always with variations. Something like the scene thus disclosed to Mr. Burke was exhibited some time afterwards to another eminent person, whose friendship has enabled me to enrich my narrative with the following graphic account:—

"I wish," says Mr. Southey, "I could tell you anything which might be found useful in your succeeding volumes. I knew Barry, and have been admitted into his den in his worst (that is to say, his maddest) days, when he was employed upon the Pandora. He wore at that time an old coat of green baize, but from which time had taken all the green that incrustations of paint and dirt had not covered. His wig was one which you might suppose he had borrowed from a scarecrow; all round it there projected a fringe of his own grey hair. He lived alone in a house which was never cleaned; and he slept on a bedstead with no other furniture than a blanket nailed on the one side.[1] I wanted him to visit me. No, he said; he could not go out by day, because he could not spare time from his great picture; and if he went out in the evening, the Academicians would

[1] Sir Martin Archer Shee, who went with a letter of introduction to him in 1788, likewise bears testimony to the miserable, dirty state in which he lived. He says, the scene he beheld would have furnished a subject for Hogarth.—Ed.

waylay him, and murder him. In this solitary, sullen life he continued, till he fell ill—very probably from want of food sufficiently nourishing; and after lying two or three days under his blanket, he had just strength enough left to crawl to his own door, open it, and lay himself down, with a paper in his hand, on which he had written his wish to be carried to the house of Mr. Carlisle (Sir Anthony) in Soho Square. There he was taken care of; and the danger from which he had thus escaped seems to have cured his mental hallucinations. He cast his slough afterwards; appeared decently dressed in his own gray hair, and mixed in such society as he liked.

"I should have told you, that a little before his illness, he had, with much persuasion, been induced to pass a night at some person's house in the country. When he came down to breakfast the next morning, and one asked how he had rested, he said, remarkably well: he had not slept in sheets for many years, and really he thought it was a very comfortable thing. He interlarded his conversation with oaths as expletives, but it was pleasant to converse with him: there was a frankness and animation about him which won goodwill, as much as his vigorous intellect commanded respect. There is a story of his having refused to paint portraits, and saying, in answer to applications, that there was a man in Leicester Square who did it. But this he said was false: for that he would at any time have painted portraits, and have been glad to paint them."

It was during these periods of misgiving and despondency that Barry thought of requesting a situation of moderate emolument from the government—he saw places of little labour and large profit filled by men of ordinary ability, and he thought ministers would prefer the help of the clever, if it were offered, to that of the dull. He failed to perceive that service of another kind than he could hope to render was the purchase-price of such situations. He applied for the place of painter to the ordnance department—he knew so little of what he asked for, that he was surprised to find that it was house-painting only, and that the profits arose from the extent of the contracts; he next applied for the situation of serjeant-

painter to the court, but withdrew his memorial on discovering that the salary was only eighteen pounds a year. His income at this time was necessarily very limited. From the funds he had sixty pounds a year, which paid his house-rent and taxes; from the Academy he derived thirty pounds a year, as professor of painting; and it has been calculated that the sale of his prints brought annually £50 more. On eighty pounds a year then this eminent artist had to exist, and provide the materials of his profession—no wonder that his dress was mean, and the appearance of his house sordid! Yet such was his independent spirit, and such his frugal habits, that he was never known either to borrow money or want it; and it was his honest pride that he preferred selling prints to strangers rather than to friends, nor would he sell to either if they chanced to utter a word unfavourable to his style of engraving.

He had even contrived to save something out of his pittance. To all appearance he was the poorest of the poor, and there was nothing about his house to tempt the spoiler: but thieves are a sagacious race; they formed their own conclusions, and in an inroad on the painter's establishment ferretted out about £400, and carried the money clear off. The public were astonished to hear of the extent of his loss; and their astonishment increased when Barry, in a formal placard, exculpated common thieves, and attributed his loss to the thirty-nine members of the Royal Academy. The nephews of Timothy Hollis—John Hollis, and Hollis Edwards—sent him at this juncture a present of £50; it is pleasant to see benevolence descend like an inheritance.

Barry was in his fifty-first year when Sir Joshua Reynolds, full of years and fame, was removed from the world. For a long course of years they had lived in hostility; but in the contest the former alone had been the sufferer. Admiration of the antique, and of Michael Angelo, had brought Barry to a steak broiled with his own hands, and a pot of porter drawn by a suspicious publican. The theory which led him to this was not more his own than the President's; but this only made matters worse: he looked upon Reynolds as a voluntary traitor to the great

cause—as a renegade to the principles which he advocated and taught; and he openly upbraided him with a mean love of gain in following the lucrative trade of portraiture. The friends of Reynolds replied, that this was the only line of art in which a painter could live like a gentleman, and that his performances were more than mere likenesses—that they partook very largely of the great historic style, and exhibited, in short, an English application of the principles of Michael Angelo. Barry for a long time closed his eyes on this ingenious theory, and continued his reproaches; but it is pleasing to be told, as we are by Dr. Fryer, that "for several years before Sir Joshua's death, this hostility had ceased; that they had at length the good sense and candour to acknowledge each other's deserts, and were not a little chagrined that any misunderstanding should ever have clouded their free intercourse." [1]

On the death of Reynolds, Barry came to the Academy and pronounced a glowing eulogium upon him as a man and an artist. This change astonished many, but it was consistent with his character; he was of an open and generous nature, easily kindled into anger, not difficult to appease, and liable, like most violent men, to those sudden revulsions of feeling which surprise friends and perplex biographers. His eloquence was rewarded; the niece of Sir Joshua, the Marchioness of Thomond, made him a present of her uncle's painting-chair. It was borne home in triumph to Castle Street, and a letter of thanks addressed to the lady, in which he compared the gift with the celebrated chair of Pindar, which was shown so many years in the porch of Olympia. With better feeling he reflected that it had been instrumental in perpetuating the "negligent, honest exteriors of the authors of 'The Rambler' and 'The Traveller:'" and that it had been pressed "by Mrs. Siddons

[1] When Reynolds quarrelled with the Academy and resigned his presidentship, Barry took his part with his usual vehemence. In a contemporary pamphlet on the state of the Royal Academy, published in 1790, it is stated that Barry, "who had formerly, with his fist clenched in the very face of the President threatened him with a personal assault when his measures were right, now seemed disposed to offer the same insult to any one who should dare to oppose them when they were wrong."—Ed.

as the Tragic Muse;" and concluded by declaring that in him it should find a reverential conservator whilst God permitted it to remain under his care.[1]

Barry, having obtained what (with his notions and habits) amounted to independence, employed his time much to his own liking: he had long indulged the wish to paint the "Progress of Theology"—and his famous picture of "Pandora" was the commencement of the series. He began these designs soon after the completion of the Adelphi pictures—they were often set aside, and again resumed—disappointment by degrees laid a chilling hand upon him, and he was visited too by those misgivings of spirit to which the sons of genius are peculiarly heirs. The "Progress of the Mosaic Doctrines," however, was sketched; and something like the first conceptions for the pieces designed to embody the coming of our Saviour could be traced at his death among the chaos of his papers. Of a great work thus imperfectly shadowed out, who can give any account? Rude sketches may indicate the main purpose and aim, but these are liable to such changes in the execution, that a finished work rarely corresponds with the original design.

At intervals, while this undertaking was his regular task, he sought refreshment in the pleasures of controversy, and wrote and published his celebrated Letter to the Dilettanti Society. In this work—which is neither commendable in aim nor temperate in language—he embodied almost all his disputes with mankind collectively and individually. After describing the leading principles of national art—the objects which the Royal Academy had been instituted to accomplish, and the purposes to which their money, as well as their energies, ought to be directed—Barry plunged into the actual conduct of the Academy's affairs—denounced private combinations and jealousies—asserted that the funds were dissipated by secret intrigues—and, as a

[1] On the death of Barry, this celebrated chair found its way, after a variety of fortune, into the hands of an auctioneer, whose hammer at length consigned it to the studio of Sir Thomas Lawrence. Death has again interposed, and the painting-chairs of those two eminent men must seek other sanctuaries.

finishing touch to this picture of weakness and corruption, proposed, seriously to all appearance, that whenever the judgment of the body was appealed to, the honest vote of each member should be secured by oath!

On the appearance of this bitter diatribe in 1797, the whole Academy, with the exception of Joseph Nollekens, declared war against the Professor of Painting. That Barry should have lost his temper can surprise no one; but that a public body, composed of the assembled talent in art of a great nation, should have lost temper too, must remain a matter of surprise to all: yet so it happened. The whole Academy was in commotion—Farington read aloud the Letter to the Dilettanti Society—information of personal irregularities was given by Messrs. Dance and Daniell—and Wilton, the sculptor, and at that period Keeper, embodied the charges in compliance with the direction of the committee. They accused James Barry of making digressions in his lectures, in which he abused members of the Academy—the dead as well as the living; of teaching the students habits of insubordination, and countenancing them in licentious and disorderly behaviour; of charging the Academy with voting in pensions among themselves sixteen thousand pounds, which should have been laid out for the benefit of the students; and finally, of having spoken unhandsomely of the President, Benjamin West.

With the haste of anger, the Academy proceeded to act upon these charges. The accused was allowed no copy of the indictment—was permitted to say nothing in explanation or defence—was formally degraded from his station of professor—and expelled the Academy,—nay, that nothing might be wanting to prove to the world the severities which public bodies can with impunity commit, the sanction of the King had been obtained to all these proceedings—before it was communicated to Barry that his name was for ever removed from the roll of academicians. These measures, which will always be pronounced by far too precipitate, sounded, at the time, about as strangely in ears unaccustomed to the bickerings and animosities which prevail in most corporate bodies, as poor Barry's own wild ex-

travagance, when he classed the academicians with thieves and housebreakers—and imagined his person and property the object of professional conspiracies.[1]

His friends flattered themselves that he was now done with debates—and would at length find time to finish those great works in which he had made some progress. In order that he might be secured against want, and to repair the loss of the thirty pounds a year of which his brethren had so ungracefully, if not unjustly, deprived him, they proposed to gather such a sum by subscription as would purchase a decent annuity. It was at this time of distress that the Earl of Buchan, among others, stood forward in Barry's behalf. This nobleman desired to be thought public director in all matters of poetry and painting in Scotland. He spent his long life in speaking kind words, writing encouraging letters, and dispensing patronizing looks to all who had visited the Vatican, or were found loitering about the nether regions of Parnassus. On this occasion he stirred himself more than was his wont, and astonished many by publicly subscribing ten pounds; he also interceded with the Society of Arts, and applied to many who thought favourably of Barry's talents. I wish he had done no more. He praised the set of proof engravings which Barry sent in a present to Dryburgh—fell in love with others which were in London—longed to possess an "easel picture" as a memorial of friendship—condescended to name the picture he particularly affected, "The Interview of Milton with Elwood the Quaker,"—and, finally, requested in addition a proof engraving from the "Birth of Pandora." The painter, pleased with all this condescension, sent a sketch of his Milton to the noble speculator in subscriptions; and the "easel picture" would have followed, but that hand was soon to be laid upon Barry which has recently fallen on his disinterested patron.

[1] Edwards, in his "Anecdotes," asserts that his robbery was merely imaginary, and that he subsequently recovered his money; but I can find no other authority for this statement. He himself, in an address to the students at the Royal Academy, attributed it to the "limbs of a riotly shameless combination, some of whom passed for my friends." —Ed.

One thousand pounds in course of time were subscribed, and an annuity of corresponding value was purchased of Sir Robert Peel; but all this kindness came too late.

He was now in the sixty-fifth year of his age; his health was generally good, and his frame, naturally strong, had been hardened with his ways of living, and promised to endure for many years. He had softened, too, the asperities of his manners, and, though the ecstasy of early thought was abated, many noble paintings were expected from his hand, now that at length his mind was eased by what he considered affluence, and he had no longer either committees or councils to disturb him. During the years which had passed since his expulsion from the Academy, he had been engaged on his great work on theology; but a large piece now grew slowly under his hand, and indeed, he never appears to have possessed that dashing alacrity of composition which distinguished most of the great Italian masters. He had been employed, too, from time to time, upon his engravings; but upon the whole it may be said that, during these latter years of his life, he had mused much and wrought little. Nevertheless, high hopes were still entertained by his well-wishers.

No previous illness had given him warning when, on the evening of the 6th of February, 1806, he was seized, as he entered the house where he usually dined, with a cold fit of a pleuritic fever, of so intense a degree that all his powers were suspended, and he could neither speak nor move. Cordials were administered; he came a little to himself, and was conveyed in a coach to his own house; but some idle boys had plugged the keyhole with dirt and pebbles, and the door could not be opened. The night was dark and cold; he was shivering with disease, and a person who accompanied him carried him to the house of Mr. Bonomi. A bed was procured in the neighbourhood. Barry was laid down. He desired to be left alone, and bolted the door. So well were his orders obeyed, that he remained for forty hours without medical aid, and when it came it was too late. The disease had struck him mortally; a hot fit had succeeded the cold one, and he complained of a burning pain in his side and of difficulty of

breathing. Ill as he was, he left his bed on the afternoon of the 8th, and repaired, pale and tottering, to Dr. Fryer, to make his complaint. He had a pain in his side, a short and incessant cough, quick and feeble pulse. He related that his friend Bonomi had made arrangements for receiving him into his house, spoke with warm feeling of the kindness of Mrs. Bonomi, and said how happy he would be there compared to under his own roof, where he had neither a servant nor a comfortable bed. Dr. Fryer requested him to go to his friend's house immediately, as he was more fit for his bed than making visits.

He went accordingly to Mr. Bonomi's, and thenceforth Dr. Fryer and Dr. Combe attended him constantly; but all skill was in vain. As the disease gained head he was warned of his approaching dissolution, and he heard of it as a thing neither to be desired nor dreaded. He conversed occasionally with much cheerfulness, and having lingered till the 22nd of February, expired in tranquillity and peace in the sixty-fifth year of his age. The Royal Academy had never proclaimed peace between themselves and their former Professor, and they now allowed his dust to remain unhonoured. The Society of Arts permitted his body to be borne from the hall of the Adelphi, which his genius had adorned, and Sir Robert Peel, who by the painter's sudden death had made a profitable bargain in the matter of the annuity, generously gave two hundred pounds to pay for his funeral, and raise a tablet in St. Paul's to his memory.

This conduct of the Academy was, no doubt, conformable to etiquette; but Barry, though he had sinned against their rules, had done nothing to lower him in the general estimation of mankind. He might be in their eyes a degraded Academician—no one could call him a degraded artist; and the remains, at least, of a man of genius had surely a claim to some concession at their hands. But a certain air of loftiness, it would seem, belongs to that body collectively, which its members ever claim individually. The sway of Reynolds was resented so far, that numbers refused their concurrence to having his body laid out in state, as it is called, in their rooms, before inter-

ment. If their dignity required this severity in the case of one whose genius had in a great degree created and supported them, it required more in the case of him who had satirized and reproached them as men mean in spirit —whose mental vision was narrow, and who could only be credited on oath. They did accordingly what they could: they allowed Barry to be borne to his grave by hands that had never touched a pencil.

James Barry said seriously of himself, "I am a pock-pitted, hard-featured little fellow." He was in person under the middle size—the vicissitudes of fortune, frequent controversies, and bitter disappointments, had impressed in early life the aspect of years upon his brow—his face was naturally grave and saturnine, which gave uncommon sweetness to his smile, and great fierceness to his anger. If we lament his unhappy temper, we cannot refuse praise to the fortitude which baffled all manner of discomfort: he resided, without a murmur, in a house the perfect image of desolation—the rent walls admitted the wind, the shattered roof let in the rain: and there, without a servant—without even a decent bed, the companion of poverty and solitude, he painted many noble works. When he commenced his far-famed Six Pictures, he was advised by one who loved him to take a better house, wear better clothes, hire a steady servant, and set up a neat establishment. Barry answered—"The pride of honesty protests against such a rash speculation." Many are the stories which have been told concerning this singular man —they are chiefly ludicrous tales of privation and pride; such as are gladly remembered by those who love whatever lowers genius to their own level, and who are as incapable of honouring amidst eccentricities what is high-minded and noble, as a pocket loadstone is of picking up an anchor.

Barry was the greatest enthusiast in art which this country ever produced—his passion for it almost amounted to madness; and but for his works, his words and actions might have been gravely cited in proof of mental alienation. He hungered and he thirsted, not figuratively, but truly, for its sake; and from boyhood to the tomb devoted

all his faculties to establish a School of Painting, which, avoiding common or familiar subjects, should embody only what is dignified, magnificent, or sublime. To this high task he brought an imagination second only to that of Fuseli, a strong love of the poetry of nature, an intimate knowledge of the works of the great masters, a deep feeling for their excellences, fine skill of hand, and unequalled fortitude and perseverance. That he failed to reap the harvest which such qualities and attainments promised, must be imputed mainly to his infirmity of temper, but partly also to what he so often complained of, the unawakened taste of the country for works of an historical nature. He wanted that graceful spirit which conciliates and persuades—which, like the fabled cestus of the goddess,

"Can from the wisest win their best resolves."

There were few at that time to patronize historical painting, save his Majesty, and West monopolized all subjects for the palaces, both sacred and profane. Portrait painters were the prosperous in British art; and few, save themselves, found the way to the tables and to the confidence of the great. Nor indeed, little as it was then, has the love of historical painting increased among us since; all the efforts of his present Majesty,[1] of Sir George Beaumont, Sir John Leycester, Sir John Swinborne, Lord Lansdowne, Lord Egremont, the Duke of Bedford, and a few others, have been nearly in vain.

Other reasons, however, may be assigned for Barry's want of success. His first picture, "The Legend of St. Patrick," was right—it was one of his own island's traditions—in it he heard the voice of Nature, and he who obeys her will seldom err. But afterwards the miracles of Greece and the Vatican oppressed and enthralled his fancy. The artist who disdains to work in the spirit of his own country will rarely work well in the spirit of any other. The names of Barry's pictures will tell where his heart was—"Pandora, or the Heathen Eve;" "The Conversion

[1] William IV.—Ed.

of Polomon in the presence of Xenocrates;" "The Birth of Venus;" "Philoctetes in Lemnos;" "Jupiter and Juno" —and many more. Affection for such subjects had long since fallen asleep, and it was not in the power of Barry to awaken it. To be truly classic he should have done for Britain what the artists of old did for Greece: their works are classical—not from being the offspring of a classic land, but because they were the embodied poetry of its actual beauty and sentiment.[1]

He turned, when it was too late, to the pages of Milton. The subjects which he sketched from the "Paradise Lost" were made when he was advanced in life, and he never finished them. They were as follows:—"Satan rising from the Fiery Gulf;" "The Temptation of Adam;" "Satan meeting with Sin and Death;" "Adam and Eve after the Fall;" "The Triumph of Michael and Fall of the Rebel Angels;" "Satan in Paradise;" "The Descent of the Guardian Angels;" "Satan Detected by Ithuriel;" and "Adam's Vision of the Misery of his Posterity." On several of these subjects Fuseli also tried his hand. They are such as require powers of an Epic order, and some of them seem to be above the grasp of our painter. But he shared largely in that kind of intrepidity of spirit which belonged to West and Fuseli: subjects of ordinary emotion had no charms for him: he loved to contemplate what was solemn and terrible; and his mind teemed with magnificent undertakings, which he wanted time or talent to realize. The multitude of his sketches, and the small

[1] It is strange how little is known of the works of Barry by the present generation. Scarcely any other of the painters whose lives are here recorded has been so completely forgotten. No single picture represents him in the national collection, and Dr. Waagen either did not find, or did not deign to notice, any in private collections. If it were not, indeed, for the gigantic monument he raised for himself at the Society of Arts, it would not be possible nowadays to form any estimate of his powers; and it is to be feared that, of the many who attend meetings in the great room in the Adelphi, very few cast more than a casual glance at this ambitious work which alone remains to tell of the high aspirations of this forgotten artist, and which, as Redgrave says, serves, perhaps, a purpose "rather of warning than of stimulus" to painters of the present day.—Ed.

number of his finished works, attest his immoderate ambition and his deficiency in some of those high qualities which, like the key-stone to an arch, are necessary to the completion of whatever is vast and grand.

His treatises, like his paintings, are distinguished by their vigour. Of the light and shade of language he was an indifferent master; nor was he fastidious in neatness of arrangement, or nice in accuracy of reasoning; nevertheless, his earnestness of manner renders his writings very readable. His enthusiasm for pencils and chisels knows no bounds; a painting with him is the first of human works, and a painter the noblest of God's creatures. Poetry, he assures us, requires little knowledge, and "the most perfect verse is no more than the animated account or relation of the story of a picture." Poetry, too, he says (and with more truth), is limited by its language to a particular country; while Painting speaks all tongues, and is readable to all nations. Northcote, in his life of Reynolds, re-echoes Barry, and proposes to detect the presence of true poetry by trying if it will turn into shape with the pencil! There is, however, much of our finest poetry that would slip like quicksilver from the pencil of a greater than Mr. Northcote. If a poem be only the animated account of a picture, how many thousand pictures must that man paint who shall give us Shakespeare, or Milton, or Spenser, or Scott, or Southey, or Wordsworth, on canvas; and if poetry be only good when it presents such images as painters can copy, how many passages have age after age admired in vanity and in ignorance! No one but a wild enthusiast, like Barry, would claim for any artist that ever breathed an equality of mind with Homer, or Shakespeare, or Dante—men who have influenced the world from its centre to its circumference; and as for Mr. Northcote's *test*—the winged rapidity of poetry gives us, no doubt, in its lowest, as well as in its higher moods, many pictures, which the genius of art can embody; but at the same time it presents us with images, so vivid and yet elusive, so distinct and yet so shadowy, as to set all art at defiance. Who shall paint Elijah's Mantle of Inspiration —the Still Small Voice—the War-Horse, whose neck is

clothed with thunder, and who snuffeth the battle afar-off —the Magic Girdle of the Fairy Queen—or the Cestus of Homer's Venus, so exquisitely rendered by Cowper—

> "An ambush of sweet snares, replete
> With love, desire, soft intercourse of hearts,
> And music of resistless whisper'd sounds."

WILLIAM BLAKE.

PAINTING, like poetry, has followers, the body of whose genius is light compared to the length of its wings, and who, rising above the ordinary sympathies of our nature, are, like Napoleon, betrayed by a star which no eye can see save their own. To this rare class belonged William Blake.

He was the second son of James Blake and Catharine his wife, and born on the 28th of November, 1757, at 28, Broad Street, Carnaby Market, London.[1] His father, a respectable hosier, caused him to be educated for his own business, but the love of art came early upon the boy; he neglected the figures of arithmetic for those of Raphael and Reynolds; and his worthy parents often wondered how a child of theirs should have conceived a love for such unsubstantial vanities. The boy, it seems, was privately encouraged by his mother. The love of designing and sketching grew upon him, and he desired anxiously to be an artist. His father began to be pleased with the notice which his son obtained, and to fancy that a painter's study might, after all, be a fitter place than a hosier's shop for one who drew designs on the backs of all the shop bills, and made sketches on the counter. He consulted an eminent artist, who asked so large a sum for instruction that the prudent shopkeeper hesitated; and young Blake declared he would prefer being an engraver—a profession which would bring bread at least, and through which he would be connected with painting. It was, indeed, time to dispose of him. In addition to his attachment to art he had displayed poetic symptoms—scraps of paper and the blank leaves of books were found covered with groups and stanzas. When his father saw sketches at the top of the sheet and

[1] Carnaby Market, in the neighbourhood of Golden Square, is done away with. The house in Broad Street, No. 28, is now occupied by a German hairdresser.—Ed.

verses at the bottom, he took him away to James Basire, the engraver, in Queen Street, Lincoln's Inn Fields, and bound him apprentice for seven years. He was then fourteen years old.[1]

It is told of Blake that at ten years of age he became an artist, and at twelve a poet. Of his boyish pencillings I can find no traces; but of his early intercourse with the Muse the proof lies before me in seventy pages of verse, written, he says, between his twelfth and his twentieth year, and published, by the advice of friends, when he was thirty.·· There are songs, ballads, and a dramatic poem—rude, sometimes, and unmelodious, but full of fine thought and deep and peculiar feeling. To those who love poetry for the music of its bells, these seventy pages will sound harsh and dissonant; but by others they will be more kindly looked upon. John Flaxman, a judge in all things of a poetic nature, was so touched with many passages that he not only counselled their publication, but joined with a gentleman of the name of Matthews in the expense, and presented the printed sheets to the artist to dispose of for his own advantage.[2] One of these productions is an address to the Muses—a common theme, but sung in no common manner:—

"Whether on Ida's shady brow,
Or in the chambers of the east,
The chambers of the sun, that now
From ancient melody have ceased;

[1] Before his apprenticeship, when he was only ten years of age, he attended a drawing school in the Strand, kept by a Mr. Pars, successor to the better-known William Shipley. Whilst with Basire he made steady progress in engraving, and he was also at one time employed in making drawings in Westminster Abbey and other churches for the antiquary Gough, an employment which probably created in him that feeling for Gothic beauty of form which is manifest in many of his works. One of his mystic engravings, entitled "Joseph of Arimathea among the rocks of Albion," is dated 1773, and therefore belongs to his early apprentice period.—Ed.

[2] These early poems were first published in 1783, in a thin octavo volume, entitled "Poetical Sketches by W. B." This is now so rare, that Gilchrist states that, after some years' vain attempt, he was forced to give up the hope of obtaining a copy. There is not one even in the British Museum.—Ed.

"Whether in heaven ye wander fair,
Or the green corners of the earth,
Or the blue regions of the air,
Where the melodious winds have birth;

"Whether on crystal rocks ye rove,
Beneath the bosom of the sea,
Wandering in many a coral grove,
Fair Nine! forsaking poesie;

"How have ye left the ancient love,
That Bards of old enjoy'd in you,—
The languid strings now scarcely move,
The sound is forced—the notes are few."

The little poem called "The Tiger" has been admired for the force and vigour of its thoughts by poets of high name. Many could weave smoother lines—few could stamp such living images:—

"Tiger! Tiger! burning bright
In the forests of the night,
What immortal hand or eye
Framed thy fearful symmetry?

"In what distant deeps or skies
Burn'd that fire within thine eyes?
On what wings dared he aspire—
What the hand dared seize the fire?

"And what shoulder and what art
Could twist the sinews of thy heart?
When thy heart began to beat,
What dread hand formed thy dread feet?

"What the hammer! what the chain!
Knit thy strength and forged thy brain?
What the anvil? What dread grasp
Dared thy deadly terrors clasp?

"When the stars threw down their spears,
And water'd heaven with their tears,
Did he smile, his work to see?
Did he who made the lamb make thee?"

In the dramatic poem of "King Edward the Third" there are many nervous lines, and even whole passages of high merit. The structure of the verse is often defective, and the arrangement inharmonious; but before the ear is

thoroughly offended, it is soothed by some touch of deep melody and poetic thought. The princes and earls of England are conferring together on the eve of the battle of Cressy. The Black Prince takes Chandos aside, and says—

> "Now we're alone, John Chandos, I'll unburthen
> And breathe my hopes into the burning air—
> Where thousand Deaths are posting up and down,
> Commission'd to this fatal field of Cressy:
> Methinks I see them arm my gallant soldiers,
> And gird the sword upon each thigh, and fit
> The shining helm, and string each stubborn bow,
> And dance to the neighing of the steeds;—
> Methinks the shout begins—the battle burns;—
> Methinks I see them perch on English crests,
> And roar the wild flame of fierce war upon
> The throng'd enemy."

In the same high poetic spirit Sir Walter Manny converses with a genuine old English warrior, Sir Thomas Dagworth—

> "O, Dagworth!—France is sick!—the very sky,
> Though sunshine light it, seems to me as pale
> As is the fainting man on his death-bed,
> Whose face is shown by light of sickly taper—
> It makes me sad and sick unto the heart;
> Thousands must fall to-day."

Sir Thomas answers:—

> "Thousands of souls must leave this prison-house
> To be exalted to those heavenly fields
> Where songs of triumph, palms of victory,
> Where peace, and joy, and love, and calm content,
> Sit singing on the azure clouds, and strew
> The flowers of heaven upon the banquet table.
> Bind ardent hope upon your feet, like shoes,
> Put on the robe of preparation.
> The table, it is spread in shining heaven,
> The flowers of immortality are blown;
> Let those who fight, fight in good steadfastness;
> And those who fall shall rise in victory."

I might transcribe from these modest and unnoticed pages many such passages. It would be unfair not to

mention that the same volume contains some wild and incoherent prose, in which we may trace more than the dawning of those strange, mystical, and mysterious fancies on which Blake subsequently misemployed his pencil. There is much that is weak, and something that is strong, and a great deal that is wild and mad, and all so strangely mingled that little or no meaning can be assigned to it—it seems like a lamentation over the disasters which came on England during the reign of King John.

Though Blake lost himself sometimes in the enchanted region of song, he seems not to have neglected to make himself master of the graver, or to have forgotten his love of designs and sketches. He was a dutiful servant to Basire, and he studied occasionally under Flaxman and Fuseli; but it was his chief delight to retire to the solitude of his room, and there make drawings, and illustrate these with verses, to be hung up together in his mother's chamber. He was always at work—he called amusement idleness, sight-seeing vanity, and money-making the ruin of all high aspirations. "Were I to love money," he said, "I should lose all power of thought; desire of gain deadens the genius of man. I might roll in wealth and ride in a golden chariot, were I to listen to the voice of parsimony. My business is not to gather gold, but to make glorious shapes, expressing god-like sentiments." The day was given to the graver, by which he earned enough to maintain himself respectably; and he bestowed his evenings upon painting and poetry, and intertwined these so closely in his compositions that they cannot well be separated.

When he was six-and-twenty years old he married Katharine Boutcher, a young woman of humble connections—the dark-eyed Kate of several of his lyric poems. She lived near his father's house, and was noticed by Blake for the whiteness of her hand, the brightness of her eyes, and a slim and handsome shape, corresponding with his own notions of sylphs and naïads. As he was an original in all things, it would have been out of character to fall in love like an ordinary mortal. He was describing one evening in company the pains he had suffered from some capricious lady or another, when Katharine Boutcher said,

"I pity you from my heart." "Do you pity me?" said Blake, "then I love you for that." "And I love you," said the frank-hearted lass, and so the courtship began. He tried how well she looked in a drawing, then how her charms became verse; and finding moreover that she had good domestic qualities, he married her. They lived together long and happily.

She seemed to have been created on purpose for Blake: she believed him to be the finest genius on earth; she believed in his verse; she believed in his designs; and to the wildest flights of his imagination she bowed the knee, and was a worshipper. She set his house in good order, prepared his frugal meal, learned to think as he thought, and, indulging him in his harmless absurdities, became, as it were, bone of his bone, and flesh of his flesh. She learned —what a young and handsome woman is seldom apt to learn—to despise gaudy dresses, costly meals, pleasant company, and agreeable invitations; she found out the way of being happy at home, living on the simplest of food, and contented in the homeliest of clothing.[1] It was no ordinary mind which could do all this; and she whom Blake emphatically called his "beloved," was no ordinary woman. She wrought off in the press the impressions of his plates; she coloured them with a light and neat hand; made drawings much in the spirit of her husband's compositions, and almost rivalled him in all things save in the power which he possessed of seeing visions of any individual, living or dead, whenever he chose to see them.

His marriage, I have heard, was not agreeable to his father; and he then left his roof and resided with his wife in Green Street, Leicester Fields. He returned to Broad Street on the death of his father, a devout man, and an honest shopkeeper, of fifty years' standing, took a first floor and a shop, and in company with one Parker, who had

[1] And, moreover, she acquired under her husband's tuition the desirable accomplishments of reading and writing, which it would seem had been omitted in her early education, for in the registry of her marriage she signs simply with a cross, not then being able, we may infer, to write her own name. They were married on the 28th of August, 1782, the bride being then in her twenty-first year.—ED.

been his fellow-apprentice, commenced printseller. His wife attended to the business, and Blake continued to engrave, and took Robert, his favourite brother, for a pupil. This speculation did not succeed—his brother, too, sickened and died; he had a dispute with Parker—the shop was relinquished, and he removed to 28, Poland Street. Here he commenced that series of works which give him a right to be numbered among the men of genius of his country. In sketching designs, engraving plates, writing songs, and composing music he employed his time, with his wife sitting at his side, encouraging him in all his undertakings. As he drew the figure he meditated the song which was to accompany it, and the music to which the verse was to be sung was the offspring, too, of the same moment. Of his music there are no specimens—he wanted the art of noting it down; if it equalled many of his drawings, and some of his songs, we have lost melodies of real value.[1]

The first fruits were the "Songs of Innocence and Experience," a work original and natural, and of high merit, both in poetry and in painting. It consists of some sixty-five or seventy scenes, presenting images of youth and manhood; of domestic sadness and fireside joy; of the gaiety, and innocence, and happiness of childhood. Every scene has its poetical accompaniment, curiously interwoven with the group or the landscape, and forming, from the beauty of the colour and the prettiness of the pencilling, a very fair picture of itself. Those designs are in general highly poetical—more allied, however, to heaven than to earth—a kind of spiritual abstractions, and indicating a better world and fuller happiness than mortals enjoy. The picture of Innocence is introduced with the following sweet verses:—

[1] J. T. Smith, in his gossiping "Book for a Rainy Day," records that he had often heard Blake read and sing several of his poems at the house of Mrs. Mathew, a lady of great literary celebrity in her day, who used to patronize the young artist-poet, and invite him to her *conversazioni*. The tunes, Smith says, to which he sung his verses were "most singularly beautiful," and "were often noted down by musical professors." It is, indeed, a pity that none have been preserved.—Ed.

"Piping down the valleys wild,
Piping songs of pleasant glee,
On a cloud I saw a child,
And he laughing said to me—

"Pipe a song about a lamb;
So I piped with merry cheer.
Piper, pipe that song again—
So I piped—he wept to hear.

"Drop thy pipe, thy happy pipe,
Sing thy songs of happy cheer—
So I sang the same again,
While he wept with joy to hear.

"Piper, sit thee down and write
In a book that all may read—
So he vanish'd from my sight:
And I pluck'd a hollow reed,

"And I made a rural pen,
And I stain'd the water clear,
And I wrote my happy songs,
Every child may joy to hear."

Another song, called "The Chimney Sweeper," is rude enough truly, but yet not without pathos:—

"When my mother died I was very young,
And my father sold me while yet my tongue
Could scarcely cry—Weep! weep! weep!
So your chimneys I clean and in soot I sleep.

"There's little Tom Dacre, who cried when his head,
That curl'd like a lamb's back, was shaved; so I said,
Hush, Tom, never mind it, for when your head's bare,
You know that the soot cannot spoil your white hair.

"And so he was quiet—and that very night,
As Tommy was a-sleeping, he had such a sight;
That thousands of sweepers, Dick, Joe, Ned, and Jack,
Were all of them lock'd up in coffins of black;

"And by came an Angel, who had a bright key,
He open'd the coffins and set them all free;
Then down a green plain, leaping, laughing they run,
And wash in a river, and shine in the sun.

"Then, naked and white, all their bags left behind,
They rise upon clouds and sport in the wind;
And the Angel told Tom, if he'd be a good boy,
He'd have God for his father and never want joy.

"And so Tommy awoke and we rose in the dark,
And got with our bags and our brushes to work;
Though the morning was cold, Tom was happy and warm,
So, if all do their duty, they need not fear harm." [1]

In a higher and better spirit he wrought with his pencil. But then he imagined himself under spiritual influences; he saw the forms, and listened to the voices of the worthies of other days; the past and the future were before him, and he heard, in imagination, even that awful voice which called on Adam amongst the trees of the garden. In this kind of dreaming abstraction he lived much of his life; all his works are stamped with it, and though they owe much of their mysticism and obscurity to the circumstance, there can be no doubt that they also owe to it much of their singular loveliness and beauty. It was wonderful that he could thus, month after month, and year after year, lay down his graver after it had won him his daily wages, and retire from the battle for bread, to disport his fancy amid

[1] It is scarcely possible to judge of the simple beauty and grace of these "Songs of Innocence" from these two or three specimens torn away from their exquisite setting in fanciful design. Swinburne, in his Critical Essay on Blake, writes of them with impassioned admiration, thus:—"If elsewhere the artist's strange strength of thought and hand is more visible, nowhere is there such pure sweetness and singleness of design in his work. All the tremulous and tender splendour of spring is united into the written word and coloured draught; every page has the smell of April. Over all things given, the sleep of flocks and the growth of leaves, the laughter in divided lips of flowers and the music at the moulded mouth of the flute-player, there is cast a pure fine veil of light, softer than sleep and keener than sunshine. The sweetness of sky and leaf, of grass and water—the bright light life of bird, child, and beast—is, so to speak, kept fresh by some graver sense of faithful and mysterious love, explained and vivified by a conscience and purpose in the artist's hand and mind. Such a fiery outbreak of spring, such an insurrection of fierce floral life and radiant riot of childish power and pleasure, no poet or painter ever gave before; such lustre of green leaves and flushed limbs, kindled cloud and fervent fleece, was never wrought into speech or shape."—Ed.

scenes of more than earthly splendour, and creatures pure as unfallen dew.

In this lay the weakness and the strength of Blake, and those who desire to feel the character of his compositions, must be familiar with his history and the peculiarities of his mind. He was by nature a poet, a dreamer, and an enthusiast. The eminence which it had been the first ambition of his youth to climb, was visible before him, and he saw on its ascent or on its summit those who had started earlier in the race of fame. He felt conscious of his own merit, but was not aware of the thousand obstacles which were ready to interpose. He thought that he had but to sing songs and draw designs, and become great and famous. The crosses which genius is heir to had been wholly unforeseen, and they befell him early. He wanted, too, the skill of hand, and fine tact of fancy and taste, to impress upon the offspring of his thoughts that popular shape which gives such productions immediate circulation. His works were, therefore, looked coldly on by the world, and were only esteemed by men of poetic minds, or those who were fond of things out of the common way. He earned a little fame, but no money by these speculations, and had to depend for bread on the labours of the graver.

All this neither crushed his spirit nor induced him to work more in the way of the world; but it had a visible influence upon his mind. He became more seriously thoughtful, avoided the company of men, and lived in the manner of a hermit, in that vast wilderness, London. Necessity made him frugal, and honesty and independence prescribed plain clothes, homely fare, and a cheap habitation. He was thus compelled more than ever to retire to worlds of his own creating, and seek solace in visions of paradise for the joys which the earth denied him. By frequent indulgence in these imaginings he gradually began to believe in the reality of what dreaming fancy painted—the pictured forms which swarmed before his eyes assumed, in his apprehension, the stability of positive revelations, and he mistook the vivid figures which his professional imagination shaped, for the poets, and heroes, and princes of old. Amongst his friends he at length ventured to in-

timate that the designs on which he was engaged, were not from his own mind, but copied from grand works revealed to him in visions; and those who believed that would readily lend an ear to the assurance that he was commanded to execute his performances by a celestial tongue![1]

Of these imaginary visitations he made good use, when he invented his truly original and beautiful mode of engraving and tinting his plates. He had made the designs of his "Days of Innocence," and was meditating, he said, on the best means of multiplying their resemblance in form and in hue; he felt sorely perplexed. At last he was made aware that the spirit of his favourite brother Robert was in the room, and to this celestial visitor he applied for counsel. The spirit advised him at once: "Write," he said, "the poetry, and draw the designs upon the copper with a certain liquid (which he named, and which Blake ever kept a secret):[2] then cut the plain parts of the plate down with aquafortis, and this will give the whole, both poetry and figures, in the manner of a stereotype." The plan recommended by this gracious spirit was adopted; the plates

[1] From earliest childhood it would seem Blake had been wont to indulge in these imaginings. He himself records that his first vision came to him when he was a boy of eight or ten. Sauntering over Peckham Rye one day, he suddenly saw a tree filled with bright angelic beings. On relating this incident on his return home, however, he narrowly escaped a thrashing from an unimaginative father for telling a lie.—Ed.

[2] Gilchrist considers that this revealed liquid was nothing more than the ordinary stopping-out varnish of engravers. Blake's method of using it, however, was entirely original. He first wrote his text, and outlined his designs on the copper with this liquid, whatever it was, and then used aquafortis or some other acid for eating away all the lights, so that letters and design were left in relief as in stereotype; he then printed off his plates in any tint that suited his fancy, using red generally for the letterpress. Gilchrist relates, from Blake's own testimony, that, at the time when the spirit first revealed this secret to him, he had only half-a-crown in the world, but he unhesitatingly sent out his wife to purchase the necessary materials, and she expended one-and-tenpence out of that sum upon them. The "Songs of Innocence" were first put forth (one can scarcely say published) in this way in 1787, with the inscription, *The Author and Printer W. Blake.* He was aided somewhat in the printing by his faithful wife, whom he had taught to take off impressions with great skill and delicacy. Even the binding of this original little volume was accomplished by her hands.—Ed.

were engraved, and the work printed off. The artist then added a peculiar beauty of his own. He tinted both the figures and the verse with a variety of colours, amongst which, while yellow prevails, the whole has a rich and lustrous beauty, to which I know little that can be compared. The size of these prints is four inches and a half high by three inches wide. The original genius of Blake was always confined, through poverty, to small dimensions. Sixty-five plates of copper were an object to him who had little money. The "Gates of Paradise," a work of sixteen designs, and those exceedingly small, was his next undertaking. The meaning of the artist is not a little obscure; it seems to have been his object to represent the innocence, the happiness, and the upward aspirations of man. They bespeak one intimately acquainted with the looks and the feelings of children. Over them there is shed a kind of mysterious halo which raises feelings of devotion. The "Songs of Innocence" and the "Gates of Paradise" became popular among the collectors of prints.[1] To the sketch-book and the cabinet the works of Blake are unfortunately confined.

If there be mystery in the meaning of the "Gates of Paradise," his succeeding performance, by name "URIZEN," has the merit or the fault of surpassing all human comprehension. The spirit which dictated this strange work was undoubtedly a dark one; nor does the strange kind of prose which is intermingled with the figures serve to enlighten us. There are in all twenty-seven designs, representing beings human, demoniac, and divine, in situa-

[1] The "Gates of Paradise," a small octavo volume, printed in the manner before described, was published in 1793. However involved the text may be, the designs at all events are very simple, and pregnant with meaning. The frontispiece suggests an answer to the difficult question, "What is man?" by representing a chrysalis on a leaf with a little baby face just emerged from it, while the last design of the series, returning to the caterpillar idea, shows a figure in a shroud, with a long worm twisting round it, and the significant text underneath, "I have said to the worm, thou art my mother and my sister." The "Gates of Paradise" purports on the title-page to be "For children," but, unlike the "Songs of Innocence," which have a truly childlike simplicity, it deals with images too vast and sad for a child's comprehension.—ED.

tions of pain and sorrow and suffering. One character—evidently an evil spirit—appears in most of the plates; the horrors of hell, and the terrors of darkness and divine wrath, seem his sole portion. He swims in gulfs of fire, descends in cataracts of flame, holds combats with scaly serpents, or writhes in anguish without any visible cause. One of his exploits is to chase a female soul through a narrow gate, and hurl her headlong down into a darksome pit. The wild verses, which are scattered here and there, talk of the sons and the daughters of Urizen. He seems to have extracted these twenty-seven scenes out of many visions; what he meant by them even his wife declared she could not tell, though she was sure they had a meaning, and a fine one. Something like the fall of Lucifer and the creation of Man is dimly visible in this extravagant work. It is not a little fearful to look upon—a powerful, dark, terrible, though undefined and indescribable, impression is left on the mind; and it is in no haste to be gone.[1] The size of the designs is four inches by six; they

[1] Even Swinburne, the chief apostle of the Blake faith, can make very little of this mysterious Urizen, who seems a sort of "Setebos," clothed in a garment of fire and smoke of Blake's weaving. Orc, also, that fearful son of space and time, who "rises like a pillar of fire above the Alps," is not easy to comprehend, though Gilchrist deems that he may be taken as a symbol of "the wild energies of nature, and more especially of man; the natural man in a state of permanent revolt and protest against the tyranny of Urizen," Caliban, in fact, battling with Setebos. The whole is full of vague images of horror, flashing forth occasionally from the surrounding darkness with appalling distinctness. Allan Cunningham makes no mention of two other of Blake's prophetic books—"The Book of Thel" and "The Marriage of Heaven and Hell"—which are perhaps even more remarkable and mystical than the Urizen. "The Marriage of Heaven and Hell," writes Swinburne, "gives us the high-water mark of Blake's intellect. None of his lyrical writings show the same strength and radiance of mind . . . . Here, for once, he has written a book as perfect as his most faultless song, as great as his most imperfect rhapsody. His fire of spirit fills it from end to end; but never deforms the body, never singes the surface of the work, as too often in the still noble books of his later life." Less imaginative critics may not perhaps be able to see quite so much in this work as Mr. Swinburne, who maybe has added the "fire" of his own "spirit" to that of Blake's in its interpretation, but even the dullest understandings will be likely to become excited over its fervent expressions of poetical philosophy. Deep wisdom too is often to be found in what Blake terms the "Pro-

bear date, "Lambeth, 1794." He had left Poland Street, and was residing in Hercules Buildings.

The name of Blake began now to be known a little, and Edwards, the bookseller, employed him to illustrate Young's "Night Thoughts." The reward in money was small, but the temptation in fame was great; the work was performed something in the manner of old books with illuminated margins. Along the ample margins which the poetry left on the page the artist sketched his fanciful creations, contracting or expanding them according to the space. Some of those designs were in keeping with the poems, but there were others which alarmed fastidious people: the serious and the pious were not prepared to admire shapes trembling in nudity round the verses of a grave divine. In the exuberance of Young there are many fine figures; but they are figures of speech only, on which

verbs of Hell," not the worldly wisdom of "Ecclesiastes" merely, though that is what they seem to profess, but here and there a truer and higher teaching. Some of the aphorisms, indeed, are remarkable for philosophic insight as well as poetical expression. Such as—

"He whose face gives no light, shall never become a star."

"What is now proved was once only imagined."

"One thought fills immensity."

"The cistern contains, the fountain overflows."

"To create a little flower is the labour of ages."

Of the more worldly sort are:—

"The crow wished everything was black, the owl that everything was white."

"The busy bee has no time for sorrow."

"The hours of folly are measured by the clock, but of wisdom no clock can measure."

"The Book of Thel" is a milder invention, a graceful poem full of sweet sadness and delicate beauty, but whose meaning is wrapped from the common gaze, though the initiated find in it an "attempt to comfort life through death; to assuage by spiritual hope the fleshly fear of man."

There were several other prophetic books put forth by Blake besides these, but space will not allow of more than the mention of their names. These are:—"Visions of the Daughters of Albion," with the motto on its title-page, "The eye sees more than the heart knows;" the "Europe" and the "America," wild and intricate allegories; the "Song of Los," or Time, resembling "Urizen" in its passionate images and fitful bursts of poetry, though falling often into the burlesque in its extravagant expression; and "The Mystical Book of Ahaina," which, as Cunningham says of "Urizen," "surpasses all human comprehension."—Ed.

art should waste none of its skill. This work was so much, in many parts, to the satisfaction of Flaxman that he introduced Blake to Hayley the poet, who, in 1800, persuaded him to remove to Felpham in Sussex, to make engravings for the "Life of Cowper." To that place he accordingly went with his wife and sister, and was welcomed by Hayley with much affection. Of his journey and his feelings he gives the following account to Flaxman, whom he usually addressed thus, "Dear Sculptor of Eternity":—

"We are arrived safe at our cottage, which is more beautiful than I thought it, and more convenient. It is a perfect model for cottages and, I think, for palaces of magnificence, only enlarging and not altering its proportions, and adding ornaments and not principals. Nothing can be more grand than its simplicity and usefulness. Felpham is a sweet place for study, because it is more spiritual than London. Heaven opens here on all sides her golden gates; her windows are not obstructed by vapours; voices of celestial inhabitants are more distinctly heard, and their forms more distinctly seen; and my cottage is also a shadow of their houses. My wife and sister are both well, and are courting Neptune for an embrace."

Thus far had he written in the language and feelings of a person of upper air; though some of the expressions are tinctured with the peculiar enthusiasm of the man, they might find shelter under the licence of figurative speech, and pass muster as the poetic language of new-found happiness. Blake thus continues:—

"And now begins a new life, because another covering of earth is shaken off. I am more famed in heaven for my works than I could well conceive. In my brain are studies and chambers filled with books and pictures of old, which I wrote and painted in ages of eternity before my mortal life, and those works are the delight and study of archangels. Why, then, should I be anxious about the riches or fame of mortality? You, O dear Flaxman, are a sublime archangel, my friend and companion from eternity. Farewell, my dear friend, remember me and my wife in love and friendship to Mrs. Flaxman, whom we ardently desire to entertain beneath our thatched roof of russet gold."

This letter, written in the year 1800, gives the true two-fold image of the author's mind. During the day he was a man of sagacity and sense, who handled his graver wisely, and conversed in a wholesome and pleasant manner; in the evening, when he had done his prescribed task, he gave a loose to his imagination. While employed on those engravings which accompany the works of Cowper, he saw such company as the country where he resided afforded, and talked with Hayley about poetry with a feeling to which the author of the "Triumphs of Temper" was an utter stranger; but at the close of day away went Blake to the sea shore to indulge in his own thoughts and

> "High converse with the dead to hold."

Here he forgot the present moment, and lived in the past. He conceived, verily, that he had lived in other days, and had formed friendships with Homer and Moses, with Pindar and Virgil, with Dante and Milton. These great men, he asserted, appeared to him in visions, and even entered into conversation. Milton, in a moment of confidence, entrusted him with a whole poem of his, which the world had never seen; but unfortunately the communication was oral, and the poetry seemed to have lost much of its brightness in Blake's recitation. When asked about the looks of those visions, he answered, "They are all majestic shadows, grey but luminous, and superior to the common height of men." It was evident that the solitude of the country gave him a larger swing in imaginary matters. His wife often accompanied him to these strange interviews; she saw nothing and heard as little, but she was certain that her husband both heard and saw.

Blake's mind at all times resembled that first page in the magician's book of gramoury, which made

> "The cobweb on the dungeon wall,
> Seem tapestry in lordly hall."

His mind could convert the most ordinary occurrence into something mystical and supernatural. He often saw less majestic shapes than those of the poets of old. "Did you

ever see a fairy's funeral, madam?" he once said to a lady, who happened to sit by him in company. "Never, sir!" was the answer. "I have," said Blake, "but not before last night. I was walking alone in my garden; there was great stillness among the branches and flowers, and more than common sweetness in the air. I heard a low and pleasant sound, and I knew not whence it came. At last I saw the broad leaf of a flower move, and underneath I saw a procession of creatures of the size and colour of green and grey grasshoppers, bearing a body laid out on a rose-leaf, which they buried with songs, and then disappeared. It was a fairy funeral." It would, perhaps, have been better for his fame had he connected it more with the superstitious beliefs of his country—amongst the elves and fairies his fancy might have wandered at will—their popular character would perhaps have kept him within the bounds of traditionary belief, and the sea of his imagination might have had a shore.

After a residence of three years in his cottage at Felpham,[1] he removed to 17, South Molton Street, London, where he lived seventeen years. He came back to town with a fancy not a little exalted by the solitude of the country, and in this mood designed and engraved an extensive and strange work which he entitled "Jerusalem." A production so exclusively wild was not allowed to make its appearance in an ordinary way: he thus announced it:—"After my three years' slumber on the banks of the ocean, I again display my giant forms to the public." Of these designs there are no less than a hundred; what their meaning is the artist has left unexplained. It seems of a religious, political, and spiritual kind, and wanders from

[1] One disturbing little incident occurred during his residence at Felpham, namely, his trial for high treason, owing to some not unnatural expressions of wrath that he indulged in on finding an insolent, drunken soldier in his garden. The visionary poet, who was of small stature, attacked the great hulking soldier, and fairly drove him out; and he, in revenge for being thus treated, swore to Blake's having made use of treasonable expressions against the King; "Damn the King and you too" seems to have been the gist of the story, but at all events Blake was tried, and his Radical sympathies being known, his friends had some difficulty in getting him acquitted.—ED.

hell to heaven, and from heaven to earth—now glancing into the distractions of our own days, and then making a transition to the antediluvians. The crowning defect is obscurity; meaning seems now and then about to dawn; you turn plate after plate, and read motto after motto, in the hope of escaping from darkness into light. But the first might as well be looked at last: the whole seems a riddle which no ingenuity can solve. Yet, if the work be looked at for form and effect rather than for meaning, many figures may be pronounced worthy of Michael Angelo. There is wonderful freedom of attitude and position. Men, spirits, gods, and angels move with an ease which makes one lament that we know not wherefore they are put in motion. Well might Hayley call him his "gentle visionary Blake." He considered the "Jerusalem" to be his greatest work, and for a set of the tinted engravings charged twenty-five guineas. Few joined the artist in his admiration. The "Jerusalem," with all its giant forms, failed to force its way into circulation.

His next work was the Illustrations of Blair's "Grave,"[1] which came to the world with the following commendation by Fuseli:—"The author of the moral series before us has endeavoured to awaken sensibility by touching our sympathies with nearer, less ambiguous, and less ludicrous imagery, than what mythology, gothic superstition, or symbols, as far-fetched as inadequate, could supply. His avocation has been chiefly employed to spread a familiar and domestic atmosphere round the most important of all subjects, to connect the visible and the invisible world without provoking probability, and to lead the eye from the milder light of time to the radiations of eternity." For these twelve "Inventions," as he called them, Blake received twenty guineas from Cromek, the engraver—a man of skill in art and taste in literature. The price was little, but nevertheless it was more than he usually received for such productions.[2] He also undertook to engrave them.

[1] Between the publication of the "Jerusalem" and Blair's "Grave" came "Milton: a Poem in two books," though why called "Milton" it is impossible to understand.—Ed.

[2] This is pointed out by Gilchrist as being incorrect; Blake, it is true,

But Blake's mode of engraving was as peculiar as his style of designing; it had little of that grace of execution about it which attracts customers, and the "Inventions," after an experiment or two, were placed under the fashionable graver of Louis Schiavonetti. Blake was deeply incensed—he complained that he was deprived of the profit of engraving his own designs, and, with even less justice, that Schiavonetti was unfit for the task.

Some of these twelve "Inventions" are natural and poetic, others exhibit laborious attempts at the terrific and the sublime. "The Old Man at Death's Door" is one of the best; in "The Last Day" there are fine groups and admirable single figures. "The Wise Ones of the Earth Pleading before the Inexorable Throne," and the "Descent of the Condemned," are creations of a high order. "The Death of the Strong Wicked Man" is fearful and extravagant, and the flames in which the soul departs from the body have no warrant in the poem or in belief. "The Descent of Christ into the Grave" is formal and tame; and the hoary old soul, in the "Death of the Good Man," travelling heavenward between two ordinary angels, required little outlay of fancy. The frontispiece — a naked Angel descending headlong, and rousing the dead with the sound of the last trumpet—alarmed the devout people of the north, and made maids and matrons retire behind their fans.

If the tranquillity of Blake's life was a little disturbed by the dispute about the twelve "Inventions," it was completely shaken by the controversy which now arose between him and Cromek respecting his "Canterbury Pilgrimage," and the famous one by Stothard. That two artists at one and the same time should choose the same subject for the pencil seems scarcely credible,—especially when such subject was not of a temporary interest. The coincidence here was so close, that Blake accused Stothard of obtaining knowledge of his design through Cromek, while Stothard, with equal warmth, asserted that Blake had commenced

often sold his drawings for a guinea and a half, but then he did not lose his copyright as in this instance.—Ed.

his picture in rivalry of himself. Blake declared that Cromek had actually commissioned him to paint the "Pilgrimage" before Stothard thought of his; to which Cromek replied that the order had been given in a vision, for he never gave it. Stothard, a man as little likely to be led aside from truth by love of gain as by visions, added to Cromek's denial the startling testimony that Blake visited him during the early progress of his picture, and expressed his approbation of it in such terms that he proposed to introduce Blake's portrait in the procession, as a mark of esteem. It is probable that Blake obeyed some imaginary revelation in this matter, and mistook it for the order of an earthly employer; but whether commissioned by a vision or by mortal lips, his "Canterbury Pilgrimage" made its appearance in an exhibition of his principal works in the house of his brother in Broad Street, during the summer of 1809.[1]

Of original designs, this singular exhibition contained sixteen:—they were announced as chiefly "of a spiritual and political nature"—but then the spiritual works and political feelings of Blake were unlike those of any other man. One piece represented "The Spiritual Form of Nelson guiding Leviathan." Another, "The Spiritual Form of Pitt guiding Behemoth."[2] This probably confounded both divines and politicians; there is no doubt that plain men went wondering away. The chief attraction was "The Can-

[1] Cromek evidently acted in a most unscrupulous manner in this transaction; indeed, all his dealings show him to have been a sharp man of business, always seeking to take advantage of the artists who worked for him. His dealings with Stothard are scarcely more creditable than those with Blake, though Stothard, in the matter of the "Pilgrimage," reaped more advantage. The matter led to the most bitter feeling between these two artists. See "Life of Stothard," vol. iii.—Ed.

[2] Another picture at this exhibition was "The Ancient Britons," a work which Mr. Seymour Kirkup characterizes as one of Blake's "best," and Southey as one of his "worst paintings." "The Spiritual Form of Pitt," a very marvellous performance, utterly incomprehensible to the uninstructed, was exhibited some years ago at Burlington House (Old Masters), as also another example of uncontrolled imagination, called "The Bard, from Gray." The works were apparently executed while he was in the power of the Chiaro-scuro demons, who, he says, tempted him at one time.—Ed.

terbury Pilgrimage," not indeed from its excellence, but from the circumstance of its origin, which was well known about town, and pointedly alluded to in the catalogue. The picture is a failure. Blake was too great a visionary for dealing with such literal wantons as the Wife of Bath and her jolly companions. The natural flesh and blood of Chaucer prevailed against him. He gives grossness of body for grossness of mind—tries to be merry and wicked —and in vain.

Those who missed instruction in his pictures, found entertainment in his catalogue, a wild performance, overflowing with the oddities and dreams of the author—which may be considered as a kind of public declaration of his faith concerning art and artists. His first anxiety is about his colours. "Colouring," says this new lecturer on the Chiaro-scuro, "does not depend on where the colours are put, but on where the lights and darks are put, and all depends on form or outline. Where that is wrong the colouring never can be right, and it is always wrong in Titian and Correggio, Rubens, and Rembrandt; till we get rid of them we shall never equal Raphael and Albert Durer, Michael Angelo and Julio Romano. Clearness and precision have been my chief objects in painting these pictures—clear colours and firm, determinate lineaments, unbroken by shadows—which ought to display, and not hide form, as is the practice of the later schools of Italy and Flanders. The picture of 'The Spiritual Form of Pitt' is a proof of power of colours, unsullied with oil or with any cloggy vehicle. Oil has been falsely supposed to give strength to colours, but a little consideration must show the fallacy of this opinion. Oil will not drink or absorb colour enough to stand the test of any little time, and of the air. Let the works of artists since Rubens' time witness to the villany of those who first brought oil-painting into general opinion and practice, since which we have never had a picture painted that would show itself by the side of an earlier composition. This is an awful thing to say to oil-painters; they may call it madness, but it is true. All the genuine old little pictures are in fresco and not in oil."

Having settled the true principles and proper materials

of colour, he proceeds to open up the mystery of his own productions. Those who failed to comprehend the pictures on looking at them, had only to turn to the following account of the Pitt and the Nelson:—"These two pictures," he says, "are compositions of a mythological cast, similar to those Apotheoses of Persian, Hindoo, and Egyptian antiquity, which are still preserved in rude monuments, being copies from some stupendous originals now lost, or perhaps buried to some happier age. The Artist, having been taken, in vision, to the ancient republics, monarchies, and patriarchates of Asia, has seen those wonderful originals, called in the sacred Scriptures the cherubim, which were painted and sculptured on the walls of temples, towns, cities, palaces, and erected in the highly cultivated states of Egypt, Moab, and Edom, among the rivers of Paradise, being originals from which the Greeks and Hetrurians copied Hercules, Venus, Apollo, and all the ground-works of ancient art. They were executed in a very superior style to those justly-admired copies, being with their accompaniments terrific and grand in the highest degree. The artist has endeavoured to emulate the grandeur of those scenes in his vision, and to apply it to modern times on a smaller scale. The Greek Muses are daughters of Memory, and not of Inspiration or Imagination, and therefore not authors of such sublime conceptions; some of these wonderful originals were one hundred feet in height; some were painted as pictures, some were carved as basso-relievos, and some as groups of statues, all containing mythological and recondite meaning. The artist wishes it was now the fashion to make such monuments, and then he should not doubt of having a national commission to execute those pictures of Nelson and Pitt on a scale suitable to the grandeur of the nation who is the parent of his heroes, in highly-finished fresco, where the colours would be as permanent as precious stones."

The man who could not only write down, but deliberately correct the printer's sheets which recorded matter so utterly wild and mad, was at the same time perfectly sensible to the exquisite nature of Chaucer's delineations, and felt rightly what sort of skill his inimitable

pilgrims required at the hand of an artist. He who saw visions in Cœle-Syria and statues a hundred feet high, wrote thus concerning Chaucer:—"The characters of his pilgrims are the characters which compose all ages and nations; as one age falls another rises, different to mortal sight, but to immortals only the same: for we see the same characters repeated again and again, in animals, in vegetables and in men; nothing new occurs in identical existence. Accident ever varies; substance can never suffer change nor decay. Of Chaucer's characters, some of the names or titles are altered by time, but the characters themselves for ever remain unaltered, and consequently they are the physiognomies of universal human life, beyond which nature never steps. Names alter—things never alter; I have known multitudes of those who would have been monks in the age of monkery, who in this deistical age are deists. As Linnæus numbered the plants, so Chaucer numbered the classes of men."

His own notions, and much of his peculiar practice in art, are scattered at random over the pages of this curious production. His love of a distinct outline made him use close and clinging dresses; they are frequently very graceful—at other times they are constrained and deform the figures which they so scantily cover. "The great and golden rule of art," says he, "is this:—that the more distinct and sharp and wiry the bounding line, the more perfect the work of art; and the less keen and sharp this external line, the greater is the evidence of weak imitative plagiarism and bungling: Protogenes and Apelles knew each other by this line. How do we distinguish the oak from the beech, the horse from the ox; but by the bounding outline? How do we distinguish one face or countenance from another, but by the bounding line and its infinite inflections and movements? Leave out this line, and you leave out life itself: all is chaos again, and the line of the Almighty must be drawn out upon it, before man or beast can exist."[1]

[1] About the only instance of approval in Blake's notes to Reynolds's "Discourses," a work which, as before said (see "Reynolds," p. 210), kindled his ire to great extent, occurs at the passage, "A firm and deter-

These abominations, concealed outline and tricks of colour—now bring on one of those visionary fits to which Blake was so liable, and he narrates with the most amusing wildness sundry revelations made to him concerning them. He informs us that certain painters were *demons*—let loose on earth to confound the "sharp, wiry outline," and fill men's minds with fear and perturbations. He signifies that he himself was for some time a miserable instrument in the hands of Chiaro-scuro demons, who employed him in making "experiment pictures in oil." "These pictures," says he, "were the result of temptations and perturbations labouring to destroy imaginative power by means of that infernal machine called Chiaro-scuro, in the hands of Venetian and Flemish demons, who hate the Roman and Florentine schools. They cause that everything in art shall become a machine; they cause that the execution shall be all blocked up with brown shadows; they put the artist in fear and doubt of his own original conception. The spirit of Titian was particularly active in raising doubts concerning the possibility of executing without a model. Rubens is a most outrageous demon, and by infusing the remembrances of his pictures, and style of execution, hinders all power of individual thought. Correggio is a soft and effeminate, consequently a most cruel demon, whose whole delight is to cause endless labour to whoever suffers him to enter his mind." When all this is translated into the language of sublunary life, it only means that Blake was haunted with the excellences of other men's works, and finding himself unequal to the task of rivalling the soft and glowing colours and singular effects of light and shade of certain great masters, betook himself to the study of others not less eminent, who happened to have laid out their strength in outline.

The impression which the talents and oddities of Blake made on men of taste and genius is well described by one whose judgment in whatever is poetical no one will question. Charles Lamb had communicated to James Mont-

mined outline is one of the characteristics of the great style in painting," against which Blake has written, "Here is a noble sentence! a sentence which overthrows all his book."—Ed.

gomery's book on chimney-sweepers the little song by Blake, which I have already quoted; it touched the feelings of Bernard Barton so deeply, that he made inquiries of his friend about the author, upon which he received the following letter in explanation, written some six years ago:—"Blake is a real name, I assure you," says Lamb; "and a most extraordinary man he is, if he be still living. He is the Blake whose wild designs accompany a splendid edition of Blair's Grave, which you may perhaps have seen or heard of; in one of which he pictures the parting of soul and body by a solid mass of human form floating off, God knows how, from a lumpish mass, fac-simile to itself—left behind on the death-bed. He paints in water-colours marvellous strange pictures—visions of his brain which he asserts that he has seen. They have great merit. He has seen the old Welsh bards on Snowdon. He has seen the beautifulest, the strongest, and the ugliest man left alive from the massacre of the Britons by the Romans, and has painted them from memory (I have seen these paintings), and asserts them to be as good as the figures of Raphael and Angelo, but not better, as they had precisely the same retro-visions and prophetic visions with himself. The painters in oil (which he will have it that neither of these great masters ever practised) he affirms to have been the ruin of art; and asserts that all the while he was engaged on his water paintings, Titian was disturbing him—Titian, the evil genius of oil-painting! His pictures, one in particular, the Canterbury Pilgrims, have wonderful power and spirit, but hard and dry, yet with grace. He has written a catalogue of them, with a most spirited criticism on Chaucer, but mystical and full of vision. I have heard of his poems, but never seen them. There is one to a tiger, which I have heard recited, beginning

> 'Tiger, tiger, burning bright,
> Through the deserts of the night,'

which is glorious. But, alas! I have not the book, and the man is flown, whither I know not—to Hades or a madhouse—but I must look on him as one of the most extraordinary persons of the age."

To describe the conversations which Blake held in prose with demons, and in verse with angels, would fill volumes, and an ordinary gallery could not contain all the heads which he drew of his visionary visitants. That all this was real he himself most sincerely believed; nay, so infectious was his enthusiasm, that some acute and sensible persons who heard him expatiate shook their heads, and hinted that he was an extraordinary man, and that there might be something in the matter. One of his brethren, an artist of some note,[1] employed him frequently in drawing the portraits of those who appeared to him in visions. The most propitious time for those "angel visits" was from nine at night till five in the morning; and so docile were his spiritual sitters, that they appeared at the wish of his friends. Sometimes, however, the shape which he desired to draw was long in appearing, and he sat with his pencil and paper ready and his eyes idly roaming in vacancy; all at once the vision came upon him, and he began to work like one possessed.

He was requested to draw the likeness of Sir William Wallace—the eye of Blake sparkled, for he admired heroes. "William Wallace!" he exclaimed, "I see him now—there, there, how noble he looks—reach me my things!" Having drawn for some time, with the same care of hand and steadiness of eye, as if a living sitter had been before him, Blake stopt suddenly, and said, "I cannot finish him—Edward the First has stept in between him and me." "That's lucky," said his friend, "for I want the portrait of Edward too." Blake took another sheet of paper, and sketched the features of Plantagenet; upon which his majesty politely vanished, and the artist finished the head of Wallace. "And pray, Sir," said a gentleman, who heard Blake's friend tell his story, "was

[1] This was John Varley, the water-colour painter, a man in many respects as eccentric as Blake himself. He was a professed astrologer, took horoscopes, and cast nativities. It was easy perhaps to him, with these proclivities, to believe in his friend's spirits, though he owned he could not see them himself, and he seems to have been about the only convert that Blake ever made. These two artists, with such kindred tastes, were very intimate during the last few years of Blake's life.—Ed.

Sir William Wallace an heroic-looking man? And what sort of personage was Edward?" The answer was: "There they are, Sir, both framed and hanging on the wall behind you, judge for yourself." "I looked (says my informant) and saw two warlike heads of the size of common life. That of Wallace was noble and heroic, that of Edward stern and bloody. The first had the front of a god, the latter the aspect of a demon."

The friend who obliged me with these anecdotes, on observing the interest which I took in the subject, said, "I know much about Blake—I was his companion for nine years. I have sat beside him from ten at night till three in the morning, sometimes slumbering and sometimes waking, but Blake never slept; he sat with a pencil and paper drawing portraits of those whom I most desired to see. I will show you, Sir, some of these works." He took out a large book filled with drawings, opened it, and continued, "Observe the poetic fervour of that face—it is Pindar as he stood a conqueror in the Olympic games. And this lovely creature is Corinna, who conquered in poetry in the same place. That lady is Lais, the courtesan—with the impudence which is part of her profession, she stept in between Blake and Corinna, and he was obliged to paint her to get her away! There! that is a face of a different stamp—can you conjecture who he is?" "Some scoundrel, I should think, Sir." "There now—that is a strong proof of the accuracy of Blake—he is a scoundrel indeed! The very individual task-master whom Moses slew in Egypt. And who is this now—only imagine who this is?" "Other than a good one, I doubt, Sir." "You are right, it is a fiend—he resembles, and this is remarkable, two men who shall be nameless; one is a great lawyer, and the other—I wish I durst name him—is a suborner of false witnesses. The other head now?—this speaks for itself—it is the head of Herod; how like an eminent officer in the army!"

He closed the book, and taking out a small panel from a private drawer, said, "This is the last which I shall show you; but it is the greatest curiosity of all. Only look at the splendour of the colouring and the original character

of the thing!" "I see," said I, "a naked figure with a strong body and a short neck—with burning eyes which long for moisture, and a face worthy of a murderer, holding a bloody cup in his clawed hands, out of which it seems eager to drink. I never saw any shape so strange, nor did I ever see any colouring so curiously splendid—a kind of glistening green and dusky gold, beautifully varnished. But what in the world is it?" "It is a ghost, Sir—the ghost of a flea—a spiritualization of the thing!" "He saw this in a vision then?" I said. "I'll tell you all about it, Sir. I called on him one evening, and found Blake more than usually excited. He told me he had seen a wonderful thing—the ghost of a flea! 'And did you make a drawing of him?' I inquired. 'No, indeed,' said he. 'I wish I had, but I shall, if he appears again!' He looked earnestly into a corner of the room, and then said, 'Here he is—reach me my things—I shall keep my eye on him. There he comes! his eager tongue whisking out of his mouth, a cup in his hand to hold blood, and covered with a scaly skin of gold and green;'—as he described him so he drew him." [1]

[1] This ghost of a flea has excited a great deal of interest of late. It was first engraved by Varley in his treatise, "Zodiacal Physiognomy," published in 1828, but the head only of this singular "spiritualization" was given in this work, and afterwards reproduced in Gilchrist's "Life," though Varley expressly stated that, "this spirit reappeared to Blake, and afforded him a view of his whole body." And, in reality, a sketch-book belonging to Varley was afterwards found in which Blake had drawn the whole figure of his bloodthirsty flea. This dirty little sketch-book chanced to fall into the hands of Mr. W. B. Scott, who gave an account of it in the "Portfolio" for July, 1871. Besides the ghost of the flea it contained records of other visions seen by Blake, one of them being that of Milton's first wife, who is drawn with a sweet, thoughtful face, set in a close-fitting cap, against which, Blake, with minute attention to detail, has written the words "*green velvet*," stating in the same careful spirit of observation, that her eyes were brown and collar black. Since then, however, Mr. Scott, by rare good fortune, has become possessed of a still more remarkable work. It seems from what Cunningham states above that Blake not only drew this remarkable figure, but that he was so enamoured of it that he actually painted it in his peculiar manner, with the utmost care and elaboration. Nothing, however, has been known of this painting until a few months ago, when it was purchased by Mr. Scott from the son of John Varley, in whose collec-

Visions, such as are said to arise in the sight of those who indulge in opium, were frequently present to Blake, nevertheless he sometimes desired to see a spirit in vain. "For many years," said he, "I longed to see Satan—I never could believe that he was the vulgar fiend which our legends represent him—I imagined him a classic spirit, such as he appeared to him of Uz, with some of his original splendour about him. At last I saw him. I was going up stairs in the dark, when suddenly a light came streaming amongst my feet; I turned round, and there he was looking fiercely at me through the iron grating of my staircase window. I called for my things—Katherine thought the fit of song was on me, and brought me pen and ink—I said, hush!—never mind—this will do—as he appeared so I drew him—there he is." Upon this, Blake took out a piece of paper with a grated window sketched on it, while through the bars glared the most frightful phantom that ever man imagined. Its eyes were large and like live coals—its teeth as long as those of a harrow, and the claws seemed such as might appear in the distempered dream of a clerk in the Herald's office. "It is the gothic fiend of our legends, said Blake—the true devil—all else are apocryphal."

These stories are scarcely credible, yet there can be no doubt of their accuracy. Another friend, on whose veracity I have the fullest dependence, called one evening on Blake, and found him sitting with a pencil and a panel, drawing a portrait with all the seeming anxiety of a man who is conscious that he has got a fastidious sitter; he looked and drew, and drew and looked, yet no living soul was visible. "Disturb me not," said he, in a whisper, "I have one sitting to me." "Sitting to you!" exclaimed his astonished visitor, "where is he, and what is he?—I see no one." "But I see him, Sir," answered Blake

tion it had remained unnoticed for many years. It is even more remarkable than the drawing, for the weird effect is heightened by the peculiar tone of colour employed and the thick coatings of paint laid on. It is certainly a work of extraordinary power and skill, whether it be a creation of the fancy, according to the usual sense in which we use these words, or a "vision," as Blake imagined, of something which was not a mere projection of his own brain.—Ed.

haughtily, "there he is, his name is Lot—you may read of him in the Scripture. *He* is sitting for his portrait." [1]

Had he always thought so idly, and wrought on such

[1] In the Cunningham manuscripts I find the following story, which, it is stated, Allan Cunningham heard too late for insertion in his "Life of Blake," but intended to include in a future edition. He has printed it, however, in his "Cabinet Gallery of Pictures." Blake, who always saw in fancy every form he drew, believed that angels descended to painters of old and sat for their portraits. When he himself sat to Phillips for that fine portrait so beautifully engraved by Schiavonetti, the painter, in order to obtain the most unaffected attitude and the most poetic expression, engaged his sitter in a conversation concerning the sublime in art:—"We hear much," said Phillips, "of the grandeur of Michael Angelo; from the engravings I should say he had been overrated. He could not paint an angel so well as Raphael." "He has *not* been overrated, sir," said Blake, "and he could paint an angel better than Raphael." "Well, but," said the other, "you never saw any of the paintings of Michael Angelo, and perhaps speak from the opinions of others. Your friends may have deceived you." "I never saw any of the paintings of Michael Angelo," replied Blake; "but I speak from the opinion of a friend who could not be mistaken." "A valuable friend, truly," said Phillips; "and who may he be, pray?" "The archangel Gabriel, sir," answered Blake. "A good authority, surely; but you know evil spirits love to assume the looks of good ones, and this may have been done to mislead you." "Well, now, sir, this is really singular," said Blake; "such were my own suspicions; but they were soon removed. I will tell you how. I was one day reading Young's 'Night Thoughts,' when I came to the passage which asks, 'Who can paint an angel?' I closed the book and cried, 'Ah! who can paint an angel?' A voice in the room answered, 'Michael Angelo could.' 'And how do you know that?' I said, looking round, but seeing nothing save a greater light than usual. 'I *know*,' said the voice, 'for I sat to him. I am the archangel Gabriel.' 'Oho!' I cried, 'you are, are you? I must have better assurance than that of a wandering voice. You may be an evil spirit; there are such in the land.' 'You shall have good assurance,' said the voice. 'Can an evil spirit do this?' I looked whence the voice came, and was then aware of a shining shape with bright wings, who diffused much light. As I looked the shape dilated more and more. He waved his hands, the roof of my study opened; he ascended into—he stood in—the sun, and beckoning to me, moved the universe. An angel of evil could not have done *that*. It was the archangel Gabriel.'" The telling of this wild story was just what Phillips needed, for it brought that rapt, intense look upon Blake's face which the painter has caught so well. The portrait of him painted on ivory by his friend Linnell, during the last year of his life, and reproduced in Gilchrist's "Life," is merely that of a serene, benevolent old man, but that by Phillips, engraved as a frontispiece in Rossetti's edition of his poems, represents the visionary poet.—Ed.

visionary matters, this memoir would have been the story of a madman, instead of the life of a man of genius, some of whose works are worthy of any age or nation. Even while he was indulging in these laughable fancies, and seeing visions at the request of his friends, he conceived, and drew, and engraved, one of the noblest of all his productions—the Inventions for the Book of Job. He accomplished this series in a small room, which served him for kitchen, bedchamber, and study, where he had no other companion but his faithful Katherine, and no larger income than some seventeen or eighteen shillings a week Of these Inventions, as the artist loved to call them, there are twenty-one, representing the Man of Uz sustaining his dignity amidst the inflictions of Satan, the reproaches of his friends, and the insults of his wife. It was in such things that Blake shone; the Scripture overawed his imagination, and he was too devout to attempt aught beyond a literal embodying of the majestic scene. He goes step by step with the narrative; always simple, and often sublime—never wandering from the subject—nor overlaying the text with the weight of his own exuberant fancy.

The passages, embodied, will show with what lofty themes he presumed to grapple. 1. Thus did Job continually. 2. The Almighty watches the good man's household. 3. Satan receiving power over Job. 4. The wind from the wilderness destroying Job's children. 5. And I alone am escaped to tell thee. 6. Satan smiting Job with sore boils. 7. Job's friends comforting him. 8. Let the day perish wherein I was born. 9. Then a spirit passed before my face. 10. Job laughed to scorn by his friends. 11. With dreams upon my bed thou scarest me—thou affrightest me with visions. 12. I am young and ye are old, wherefore I was afraid. 13. Then the Lord answered Job out of the whirlwind. 14. When the morning stars sang together, and the sons of God shouted for joy. 15. Behold now Behemoth, which I made with thee. 16. Thou hast fulfilled the judgment of the wicked. 17. I have heard thee with the hearing of my ear, but now my eye rejoiceth in thee. 18. Also the

Lord accepted Job. 19. Every one also gave him a piece of money. 20. There were not found women fairer than the daughters of Job. 21. So the Lord blessed the latter end of Job more than the beginning.[1]

While employed on these remarkable productions, he was made sensible that the little approbation which the world had ever bestowed on him was fast leaving him. The waywardness of his fancy, and the peculiar execution of his compositions, were alike unadapted for popularity; the demand for his works lessened yearly from the time that he exhibited his Canterbury Pilgrimage; and he could hardly procure sufficient to sustain life, when old age was creeping upon him. Yet, poverty-stricken as he was, his cheerfulness never forsook him—he uttered no complaint—he contracted no debt, and continued to the last manly and independent. It is the fashion to praise genius when it is gone to the grave—the fashion is cheap and convenient. Of the existence of Blake few men of taste could be ignorant—of his great merits multitudes knew, nor was his extreme poverty any secret. Yet he was reduced—one of the ornaments of the age—to a miserable garret and a crust of bread, and would have perished from want, had not some friends, neither wealthy nor powerful, averted this disgrace from coming upon our country. One of these gentlemen, Mr. Linnell, employed Blake to engrave his "Inventions of the Book of Job;" by this he earned money enough to keep him living—for the good old man still laboured with all the ardour of the days of his youth, and with skill equal to his enthusiasm. These engravings are very rare, very beautiful, and very peculiar. They are in the earlier fashion of workmanship, and bear no resemblance whatever to the polished and graceful style which now prevails. I have never seen a tinted copy, nor am I sure that tinting would accord with

[1] The original fifteen water-colour drawings for these marvellous "inventions" were executed by Blake in 1823-25, for Mr. Butts, his chief friend and purchaser, during the latter years of his life. They afterwards passed into the possession of Mr. Linnell, who lent them in 1876 to the Blake Exhibition at the Burlington Club. The engravings executed by Blake from these in 1828 were placed under the pictures. —Ed

the extreme simplicity of the designs, and the mode in which they are handled. "The Songs of Innocence," and these "Inventions for Job," are the happiest of Blake's works, and ought to be in the portfolios of all who are lovers of nature and imagination.

Two extensive works, bearing the ominous names of "Prophecies," one concerning America, the other Europe, next made their appearance from his pencil and graver. The first contains eighteen, and the other seventeen plates, and both are plentifully seasoned with verse, without the incumbrance of rhyme. It is impossible to give a satisfactory description of these works; the frontispiece of the latter, representing the Ancient of Days, in an orb of light, stooping into chaos, to measure out the world, has been admired less for its meaning than for the grandeur of its outline. A head and a tail-piece in the other have been much noticed—one exhibits the bottom of the sea, with enormous fishes preying on a dead body—the other, the surface, with a dead body floating, on which an eagle with outstretched wings is feeding. The two angels pouring out the spotted plague upon Britain—an angel standing in the sun, attended by three furies—and several other Inventions in these wild works, exhibit wonderful strength of drawing and splendour of colouring. Of loose prints—but which were meant doubtless to form part of some extensive work—one of the most remarkable is the Great Sea Serpent; and a figure, sinking in a stormy sea at sunset—the glow of which, with the foam upon the dark waves, produces a magical effect.

After a residence of seventeen years in South Molton Street, Blake removed (not in consequence, alas! of any increase of fortune), to No. 3, Fountain Court, Strand. This was in the year 1823. Here he engraved by day and saw visions by night, and occasionally employed himself in making Inventions for Dante; and such was his application that he designed in all one hundred and two, and engraved seven. It was publicly known that he was in a declining state of health; that old age had come upon him, and that he was in want. Several friends, and artists among the number, aided him a little, in a delicate

way, by purchasing his works, of which he had many copies. He sold many of his "Songs of Innocence," and also of "Urizen," and he wrought incessantly upon what he counted his masterpiece, the "Jerusalem," tinting and adorning it, with the hope that his favourite would find a purchaser. No one, however, was found ready to lay out twenty-five guineas on a work which no one could have any hope of comprehending, and this disappointment sank to the old man's heart.

He had now reached his seventy-first year, and the strength of nature was fast yielding. Yet he was to the last cheerful and contented. "I glory," he said, "in dying, and have no grief but in leaving you, Katherine; we have lived happy, and we have lived long; we have been ever together, but we shall be divided soon. Why should I fear death? Nor do I fear it. I have endeavoured to live as Christ commands, and have sought to worship God truly—in my own house, when I was not seen of men." He grew weaker and weaker—he could no longer sit upright; and was laid in his bed, with no one to watch over him, save his wife, who, feeble and old herself, required help in such a touching duty.

The "Ancient of Days" was such a favourite with Blake, that three days before his death, he sat bolstered up in bed, and tinted it with his choicest colours and in his happiest style. He touched and retouched it—held it at arm's length, and then threw it from him, exclaiming, "There! that will do! I cannot mend it!"[1] He saw his

[1] This is probably the extraordinary water-colour sketch now in the possession of Mr. W. B. Scott. It has a most peculiar effect at a little distance, for its bold curves assume the appearance of a great yellow snail with its neck outstretched.

Another drawing in Mr. Scott's collection is also remarkable as taking a transcendental view of the Nativity. Mary is here represented as swooning in the arms of Joseph, while the Holy Babe comes to life in a glory of light before her. He turns towards Elizabeth, who stretches out her arms to receive the miraculously born child, although she has already the baby, St. John, on her lap, who folds his little hands in prayer.

This subject does not seem ever to have been engraved by Blake, but Mr. W. B. Scott has recently published it as one of a series of etchings he has executed from designs by Blake.—Ed.

wife in tears—she felt this was to be the last of his works—"Stay, Kate! (cried Blake) keep just as you are —I will draw your portrait—for you have ever been an angel to me"—she obeyed, and the dying artist made a fine likeness.[1]

The very joyfulness with which this singular man welcomed the coming of death, made his dying moments intensely mournful. He lay chanting songs, and the verses and the music were both the offspring of the moment. He lamented that he could no longer commit those inspirations, as he called them, to paper. "Kate," he said, "I am a changing man—I always rose and wrote down my thoughts, whether it rained, snowed, or shone, and you arose too and sat beside me—this can be no longer." He died on the 12th of August, 1827, without any visible pain—his wife, who sat watching him, did not perceive when he ceased breathing.

William Blake was of low stature and slender make, with a high pallid forehead, and eyes large, dark, and expressive. His temper was touchy, and when moved, he spoke with an indignant eloquence, which commanded respect. His voice, in general, was low and musical, his manners gentle and unassuming, his conversation a singular mixture of knowledge and enthusiasm. His whole life was one of labour and privation,—he had never tasted the luxury of that independence which comes from professional profit. This untoward fortune he endured with unshaken equanimity—offering himself, in imagination, as a martyr in the great cause of poetic art;—*pitying* some of his more fortunate brethren for their inordinate love of gain; and not doubting that whatever he might have won in gold by adopting other methods, would have been a poor compensation for the ultimate loss of fame. Under this agreeable delusion he lived all his life—he was satisfied when his graver gained him a guinea a week —the greater the present denial, the surer the glory hereafter.

Though he was the companion of Flaxman and Fuseli,

[1] It is described by Mr. Tatham, who saw it at the time it was drawn, as "a frenzied sketch of some power, highly interesting, but not like."

and sometimes their pupil, he never attained that professional skill, without which all genius is bestowed in vain. He was his own teacher chiefly; and self-instruction, the parent occasionally of great beauties, seldom fails to produce great deformities. He was a most splendid tinter, but no colourist, and his works were all of small dimensions, and therefore confined to the cabinet and the portfolio. His happiest flights, as well as his wildest, are thus likely to remain shut up from the world. If we look at the man through his best and most intelligible works, we shall find that he who could produce the "Songs of Innocence" and "Experience," the "Gates of Paradise," and the "Inventions for Job," was the possessor of very lofty faculties, with no common skill in art, and moreover that, both in thought and mode of treatment, he was a decided original. But should we, shutting our eyes to the merits of those works, determine to weigh his worth by his "Urizen," his "Prophecies of Europe and America," and his "Jerusalem," our conclusion would be very unfavourable; we would say that, with much freedom of composition and boldness of posture, he was unmeaning, mystical, and extravagant, and that his original mode of working out his conceptions was little better than a brilliant way of animating absurdity. An overflow of imagination is a failing uncommon in this age, and has generally received of late little quarter from the critical portion of mankind. Yet imagination is the life and spirit of all great works of genius and taste; and, indeed, without it, the head thinks and the hand labours in vain. Ten thousand authors and artists rise to the proper, the graceful, and the beautiful, for ten who ascend into "the heaven of invention." A work—whether from poet or painter—conceived in the fiery ecstasy of imagination, lives through every limb; while one elaborated out by skill and taste only will look, in comparison, like a withered and sapless tree beside one green and flourishing. Blake's misfortune was that of possessing this precious gift in excess. His fancy overmastered him—until he at length confounded "the mind's eye" with the corporeal organ, and dreamed himself out of the sympathies of actual life.

His method of colouring was a secret which he kept to himself, or confided only to his wife; he believed that it was revealed in a vision, and that he was bound in honour to conceal it from the world. "His modes of preparing his grounds," says Smith, in his "Supplement to the Life of Nollekens," "and laying them over his panels for printing, mixing his colours, and manner of working, were those which he considered to have been practised by the early fresco painters, whose productions still remain in many instances vividly and permanently fresh. His ground was a mixture of whiting and carpenters' glue, which he passed over several times in the coatings; his colours he ground himself, and also united with them the same sort of glue, but in a much weaker state. He would, in the course of painting a picture, pass a very thin transparent wash of glue-water over the whole of the parts he had worked upon, and then proceed with his finishing. He had many secret modes of working, both as a colourist and an engraver. His method of eating away the plain copper, and leaving the lines of his subjects and his words as stereotype, is, in my mind, perfectly original. Mrs. Blake is in possession of the secret, and she ought to receive something considerable for its communication, as I am quite certain it may be used to advantage, both to artists and literary characters in general." The affection and fortitude of this woman entitle her to much respect. She shared her husband's lot without a murmur, set her heart solely upon his fame, and soothed him in those hours of misgiving and despondency which are not unknown to the strongest intellects. She still lives to lament the loss of Blake—and *feel* it.[1]

Of Blake's merits as a poet I have already spoken—but something more may be said—for there is a simplicity and a pathos in many of his snatches of verse worthy of the olden muse. On all his works there is an impress of poetic thought, and what is still better a gentle humanity and charitable feeling towards the meanest work of God,

[1] Mrs. Blake died in 1831, at the age of sixty-five, and was buried beside her husband in Bunhill Fields. No stone marked the place where the poet-artist was laid, and the grave cannot now be identified.—Ed.

such as few bards have indulged in. On the orphan children going to church on Holy Thursday, the following touching verses were composed—they are inserted between the procession of girls and the procession of boys in one of his singular engravings.

"'Twas on a Holy Thursday,
their innocent faces clean,
Came children walking two and two,
in red, and blue, and green;
Grey-headed beadles walked before
with wands as white as snow,
Till into the high dome of Paul's,
they like Thames waters flow.
O, what a multitude they seemed,
these flowers of London town!
Seated in companies they sit,
with radiance all their own.
The hum of multitudes was there,
but multitudes of lambs,
Thousands of little boys and girls
raising their innocent hands.
Now, like a mighty wind, they raise
to heaven the voice of song,
Or like harmonious thunderings,
the seats of heaven among.
Beneath them sit the aged men,
wise guardians of the poor,
Then cherish pity, lest you drive
an angel from your door."

Under the influence of gayer feelings, he wrote what he called the "Laughing Song"—his pencil drew young men and maidens merry round a table, and a youth, with a plumed cap in one hand and a wine-cup in the other, chaunts these gladsome verses.

"When the green woods laugh with the voice of joy,
And the dimpling stream runs laughing by;
When the air does laugh with our merry wit,
And the green hill laughs with the noise of it.

"When the meadows laugh with lively green,
And the grasshopper laughs in the merry scene;
When Mary, and Susan, and Emily,
With their sweet round mouths sing ha! ha! he!

"When the painted birds laugh in the shade,
Where our table with cherries and nuts is spread;
Come live and be merry, and join with me,
To sing the sweet chorus of ha! ha! he!"

In the "Song of the Lamb," there is a simplicity which seems easily attained till it is tried, and a religious tenderness of sentiment in perfect keeping with the poetry. A naked child is pencilled standing beside a group of lambs, and these verses are written underneath.

"Little lamb, who made thee?
Do'st thou know who made thee?
Gave thee life, and bade thee feed,
By the stream and o'er the mead;
Gave thee clothing of delight,
Softest clothing—woolly, bright;
Gave thee such a tender voice,
Making all the vales rejoice?
Little lamb, who made thee?
Dost thou know who made thee?

"Little lamb, I'll tell thee;
Little lamb, I'll tell thee;
He is called by thy name,
For He calls himself a lamb;
He is meek, and He is mild,
He became a little child;
I a child, and thou a lamb,
We are called by His name.
Little lamb, God bless thee;
Little lamb, God bless thee."

It would be unjust to the memory of the painter and poet to omit a song which he composed in honour of that wife who repaid with such sincere affection the regard which he had for her. It has other merits.

"I love the jocund dance,
The softly breathing song,
Where innocent eyes do glance,
And where lisps the maiden's tongue.

"I love the laughing vale,
I love the echoing hill,
Where mirth does never fail,
And the jolly swain laughs his fill.

"I love the pleasant cot,
I love the innocent bower,

Where white and brown is our lot
Or fruit at the mid-day hour.

"I love the oaken seat,
Beneath the oaken tree,
Where all the old villagers meet,
And laugh our sports to see.

"I love our neighbours all,—
But, Kitty, I better love thee,
And love them I ever shall,
But thou art all to me."

Images of a sterner nature than those of domestic love were, however, at all times, familiar to his fancy; I have shown him softened down to the mood of babes and sucklings; I shall exhibit him in a more martial temper. In a ballad, which he calls "Gwinn, King of Norway," there are many vigorous verses—the fierce Norwegian has invaded England with all his eager warriors.

Like reared stones around a grave
They stand around their king."

But the intrepid islanders are nothing dismayed; they gather to the charge: these are the words of Blake forty-six years ago;—and this man's poetry obtained no notice, while Darwin and Hayley were gorged with adulation.

"The husbandman now leaves his plough
To wade through fields of gore,
The merchant binds his brows in steel,
And leaves the trading shore.

"The shepherd leaves his mellow pipe,
And sounds the trumpet shrill,
The workman throws his hammer down,
To heave the bloody bill.

"Like the tall ghost of Barraton,
Who sports in stormy sky,
Gwinn leads his host, as black as night
When pestilence does fly.

"With horses and with chariots,—
And all his spearmen bold
March to the sound of mournful song,
Like clouds around him rolled.

"The armies stand like balances
Held in the Almighty's hand,
Gwinn, thou hast filled thy measure up,
Thou'rt swept from out the land.

"Earth smokes with blood, and groans and shakes
To drink her children's gore,
A sea of blood! nor can the eye
See to the trembling shore.

"And on the verge of this wild sea
Famine and death do cry,
The shrieks of women and of babes
Over the field do fly."

As Blake united poetry and painting in all his compositions, I have endeavoured to show that his claims to the distinction of a poet were not slight. He wrought much and slept little, and has left volumes of verse, amounting, it is said, to nearly an hundred, prepared for the press. If they are as wild and mystical as the poetry of his "Urizen," they are as well in manuscript—if they are as natural and touching as many of his "Songs of Innocence," a judicious selection might be safely published.[1]

[1] It says much for Allan Cunningham's artistic insight, that he should have appreciated Blake's genius thus highly, at a time when writers on art, for the most part, either mocked at him as a madman, or ignored him altogether. The "Edinburgh Review," indeed, when this work first appeared, smiled at the "partiality" of the author in including a man "who could scarcely be considered a painter." Had he not done so, however, we should have missed one of the most interesting of his biographies, and one which even now has a distinct value, though since his time three noteworthy works have been written on the life and genius of Blake, namely, Gilchrist's "Life," published in 1863, by which this "Pictor ignotus" was first revealed to the intelligent public; the remarkable "Critical Essay" by Algernon C. Swinburne, published in 1868; and W. M. Rossetti's edition of his Poems, with a prefatory memoir, in 1875.

But what has done more than anything else to make Blake known to us at the present day is the exhibition of his works, which was organized by the Burlington Fine Arts Club in 1876. Here, for the first time, the erratic productions of his art were gathered together, and it became possible to judge of the value of his life's work. This value is of course differently estimated by different writers; but there is decidedly a tendency at the present day to exalt Blake's performance beyond its actual merit. A sort of Blake *culte* has indeed been set up of late as a modern development of artistic faith, which it is only given to the initiated few to understand. This will probably burn itself out in a short time, and more discriminative worship will recognize the weakness as well as the strength of this perplexing artistic nature, in which the wisdom of the sage, the simplicity of the child, and the uncontrolled imagination of the madman, were so strongly allied.—Ed.

JOHN OPIE

WAS born in the parish of St. Agnes, about seven miles from the town of Truro in Cornwall, in May, 1761. His father and grandfather were carpenters, and wrote their names Oppy;[1] his mother was descended from the ancient family of Tonkin, in the same district, whose chief claim to distinction arises from a county history, which one of her relatives wrote, and which remains unfinished, as well as unpublished, in the hands of Lord De Dunstanville. Of his mother's claim to high provincial descent he was either ignorant or disdainful: for his widow—a name of some note in literature—confesses that she was made acquainted with it for the first time by a brief sketch of his character, published after his death by Mr. Prince Hoare.

He appears to have been regarded amongst his rustic companions as a kind of parochial wonder from his early years. At the age of twelve he had mastered Euclid,[2] and was considered so skilful in arithmetic and penmanship, that he commenced an evening school for the instruction of the peasants of the parish of St. Agnes. His father—a blunt mechanic—seems to have misunderstood all these indications of mental superiority, and wished him to leave the pen for the plane and the saw; and it would appear that his paternal desires were for some time obeyed, for John accompanied, at least, his father to his work; but this was when he was very young, and it seems probable

[1] It seems certain that the name was never so written. Oppy was a distinct name in the Cornish mining districts, and by no means to be confounded with Opie.—Ed.

[2] His uncle, according to Hoare, used to call him "little Sir Isaac," on account of his proficiency in mathematics.—Ed.

that he disliked the business, since his father had to chastise him for making ludicrous drawings with red chalk on the deals which were planed up for use.

His love of art came upon him early. When he was ten years old he saw Mark Oates—an elder companion, and now a Captain of Marines—draw a butterfly; he looked anxiously on, and exclaimed, "I think I can draw a butterfly as well as Mark Oates." He took a pencil, tried, succeeded, and ran breathless home to tell his mother what he had done. Soon afterwards he saw a picture of a farmyard in a house in Truro where his father was at work; he looked and looked—went away—returned again and looked—and seemed unwilling to be out of sight of this prodigy. For this forwardness his father—whose hand seems to have been ever ready in that way—gave him a sharp chastisement; but the lady of the house interposed, and indulged the boy with another look. On returning home he procured cloth and colours, and made a tolerable copy of the painting from memory alone. He likewise attempted original delineation from life; and, by degrees, hung the humble dwelling round with likenesses of his relatives and companions, much to the pleasure of his uncle, a man with sense and knowledge above his condition, but greatly to the vexation of his father, who could not comprehend the merit of such an idle trade.

Of the early days of

"The Cornish Boy in tin mines bred,"

as Wolcot describes him, we have various conflicting accounts.[1] The Secretary for Foreign Correspondence in the Royal Academy says, that he followed his studies in art

[1] In the "Annual Biography and Obituary" for 1820, the following account is given of the first acquaintance between Wolcot and Opie. It purports to be taken from Peter Pindar's own lips:—

"Being," he says, "on a visit to a relation in Cornwall, I saw either the drawing or print of a farm-yard in the parlour, and after looking at it slightly, remarked 'that it was a busy scene, but ill executed.' This point was contested by a she-cousin, who observed that it was greatly admired by many, and particularly by John Opie, a lad of great genius. Having learned the place of the artist's abode, I instantly sallied forth, and found him at the bottom of a saw-pit, cutting wood by moving the

with much ardour, and that his sketches attracted the notice of Wolcot (Peter Pindar), then residing as a physician in Truro, whose knowledge in painting and sound judgment were of great advantage to the young scholar. A rougher man tells a ruder story. "Dr. Wolcot," says Smith, "compassionately took him as a lad to clean knives, feed the dog, &c., purposely to screen him from the beating his father would now and then give him for chalking the sawpit all over. Oppy—for so we must for the present call him—always staid a long time when he went to the slaughterhouse for paunches for the dog: at last the Doctor was so wonderfully pleased by John's bringing him home an astonishing likeness of his friend the carcass butcher, that he condescended to sit to him, and the production was equally surprising." Some such story as this was related by Wolcot himself, in his half grave and half humorous way, at the period when the subject of his memoir was high in fame; but as his purpose was to rebuke the pride of the successful artist, his account must be received with some caution. It is certain, however, that our painter lived whilst a boy as a menial in the satirist's family, and gained his goodwill by his talents.

How long he remained with Wolcot has not been men-

lower part of an instrument which was regulated above by another person. Having inquired in the dialect of the country if he could paint—'Con you paient?'—I was answered from below in a similar accent and language that 'he could paient Queen Charlotte and Duke William and Mrs. Somebody's Cot.' A specimen was then shown me, which was incorrect and incomplete; but when I learned that he was such an enthusiast in his art that he got up by three o'clock of a summer's morning to draw with chalk or charcoal, I instantly conceived that he must possess all that zeal necessary for obtaining eminence. A gleam of hope then darted through my bosom, and I felt it possible to raise the price of his labours from eightpence or a shilling to a guinea a day. Actuated by this motive, I instantly presented him with pencil, colours, and canvas, to which I added a few instructions."

It will be seen that Wolcot here takes the whole credit to himself of having directed Opie's young talent, and it is tolerably certain that he was of great use to him at the beginning of his career; but, as Cunningham remarks, Wolcot's stories require to be received with caution. Redgrave throws doubt upon almost all the stories told of Opie's early life. —Ed.

tioned. When yet very young, we find him commenced as portrait-painter by profession, and wandering from town to town in quest of employment. "One of these expeditions," says Prince Hoare, "was to Padstow, whither he set forward, dressed as usual in a boy's plain short jacket, and carrying with him all proper apparatus for portrait-painting. Here, amongst others, he painted the whole household of the ancient and respectable family of *Prideaux*, even to the dogs and cats of the family. He remained so long absent from home, that some uneasiness began to arise on his account, but it was dissipated by his returning dressed in a handsome coat, with very long skirts, laced ruffles, and silk stockings. On seeing his mother he ran to her, and taking out of his pocket twenty guineas which he had earned by his pencil, he desired her to keep them: adding, that in future he should maintain himself."

For his mother he always entertained the deepest affection—and neither age nor the pressure of worldly business diminished his enthusiasm in the least. He loved to speak of the mildness of her nature and the tenderness of her heart—of her love of truth and her maternal circumspection. He delighted to recall her epithets of fondness, and relate how she watched over him when a boy, and warmed his gloves and great-coat in the winter mornings on his departure for school. This good woman lived to the age of ninety-two, enjoyed the fame of her son, and was gladdened with his bounty.

Of those early efforts good judges have spoken with much approbation;—they were deficient in grace, but true to nature, and remarkable for their fidelity of resemblance. He painted with small pencils, and finished more highly than when his hand had attained more mastery. Lord Bateman was one of his earliest patrons, and employed him to paint old men and travelling mendicants: sitters such as those neither alarmed the rustic artist with their dignity, nor annoyed him with their remarks—they sat in silent wonder, and beheld the second creation of their persons—then rose and thought him a wondrous lad. By this practice his hand attained that ready and dashing

freedom of manner which was so much his friend when more fastidious heads came to his easel. His usual price, when he was sixteen years of age, was seven shillings and sixpence for a portrait. But of all the works which he painted in those probationary days, that which won the admiration of the good people of Truro most was a parrot walking down his perch: all the living parrots that saw it acknowledged the resemblance. So much was he charmed with his pursuit and his prospects, that when Wolcot asked him how he liked painting,—"Better," he answered, "than bread and meat."

In the twentieth year of his age our limner formed the resolution of visiting London, and set out for the great city under the protection of Wolcot. It is said that the poet and the painter held a consultation upon the rustic sound of Oppy, and both uniting in opinion that it was vulgar and unmusical, changed it to Opie—a name owned by an old Cornish family. The alteration was immaterial, for they are both evidently the same name:[1] but under all the external advantages which Opie could claim over Oppy, he was presented to Sir Joshua Reynolds. He had not as yet determined on having himself announced, in the blazonry of prose and verse, as the "Wonderful Cornishman," on whom nature had spontaneously, without study, dropt down the gifts of art: the President received him courteously, gave him some advice, and desired to see him again. He evidently did not consider this new marvel at all marvellous.

To rise, by silent and slow degrees, to fame, suited ill with the rustic impatience of Opie, and worse with the vanity of Wolcot, who desired to amaze the town by proclaiming a prodigy.[2] Peter Pindar was right for once.

[1] We have already stated that this was not the case.—Ed.

[2] It appears that it was not entirely from disinterested motives that Wolcot became the patron and advertiser of the young Opie. He himself admits that their coming to London together was a sort of joint speculation. "At length I proposed to him," Wolcot writes, "to go first to Exeter, and afterwards to London, and having lost an income of £300 or £400 by the change of scene, entered into a written agreement by which it was agreed we should share the profits in equal divisions. We actually did so for a year; but at the end of that time my pupil told

Nothing is more capricious than public taste: its huge appetite for wonders requires daily food; and it swallows all with the ravenous avidity with which the giant gulped the wine of Ulysses, and cried, with his half-breathless voice,—"More!—Give me more!—This is divine!" Even if the candidate for its fickle approbation wants original genius to carry him triumphantly onwards, he may, nevertheless, have address enough to secure a fortune before his deficiency is discovered—or the huzza rises on the appearance of another new wonder. All this was present to the mind of the sagacious satirist: he took his measures accordingly, and the wealthy and titled hordes, who professed taste and virtù, and were absolute in art and literature, came swarming out to behold "the Cornish Wonder"—for as such the patron announced the painter.

Of the success of this manœuvre Northcote gives this graphic account:—"The novelty and originality of manner in his pictures, added to his great abilities, drew an universal attention from the connoisseurs, and he was immediately surrounded and employed by all the principal nobility of England. When he ceased, and that was soon, to be a novelty, the capricious public left him in disgust. They now looked out for his defects alone—and he became, in his turn, totally neglected and forgotten; and, instead of being the sole object of public attention, and having the street where he lived so crowded with coaches of the nobility as to become a real nuisance to the neighbourhood, 'so,' as he jestingly observed to me, 'that he thought he must place cannon at the door to keep the multitude off from it,' he now found himself as entirely deserted as if his house had been infected with the plague. Such is the

me I might return to the country, as he could now do for himself." Writers differ as to the exact date of Opie's settlement in London, but it was probably in the early part of 1780. Leslie relates that Northcote, on calling upon Reynolds in May, 1780, soon after his return from Italy, was greeted by him with the exclamation, "Ah, my dear Sir, you may go back; there is a wondrous Cornish man who is carrying all before him." "What is he like?" asked Northcote. "Like? Why, like Caravaggio and Velasquez in one." This naturally disturbed Northcote; but the two painters, who were each setting up in the same line of art, strange to say, soon became friends in spite of a little rivalry.—Ed.

world!" His popularity was not, however, so very brief as this description would induce us to infer. Some time elapsed before he executed his commissions. When the wonder of the town began to abate, the country came gaping in; and ere he wearied both, he had augmented the original thirty guineas with which he commenced the adventure, to a very comfortable sum; had furnished a house in Orange Court, Leicester Fields, and was every way in a condition to bid immediate want defiance.

The first use which he made of his success was to spread comfort around his mother; and then he proceeded with his works and his studies like one resolved to deserve the distinction which he had obtained. His own strong natural sense and powers of observation enabled him to lift the veil which the ignorant admiration of the multitude had thrown over his defects: he saw where he was weak, and laboured most diligently to improve himself. His progress was great, and visible to all save the leaders of taste and fashion. When his works were crude and unstudied, their applause was deafening; when they were such as really merited a place in public galleries, the world, resolved not to be infatuated twice with the same object, paid him a cold, or at least a very moderate attention. "Reynolds," says Wilton the sculptor, "is the only eminent painter who has been able to charm back the public to himself after they were tired of him." The somewhat rough and unaccommodating manners of Opie were in his way to fortune: it requires delicate feet to tread the path of portraiture; and we must remember that he was a peasant, unacquainted with the elegance of learning, and unpolished by intercourse with the courtesies and amenities of polite life. Of this he could learn little in his father's cottage: and Wolcot, whose skill lay in coarse satiric verse, in boisterous humour, and in profane swearing, could be but an indifferent instructor. He was thrown into the drawing-room rough and rude as he came from the hills of Cornwall, and had to acquit himself as well as he could.

I can hardly believe all that has been said as to that

fear of heart and fever of spirit which were upon Opie when he found himself fanned for the first time with duchesses' plumes, and enclosed in a glittering circle of garters and stars. A weak man might have been bewildered, and a very vain man too much elated—but he was neither weak nor vain; and it is apparent that he made no efforts to accommodate himself to the atmosphere which he has been described as breathing with such superfluity of respect.

Indeed he appears to have been a plain bold man, with a moderate share of sensitiveness. "His habitual ruggedness of address," observes Mrs. Inchbald, "was stigmatized by the courtly observer with the appellation of ill-breeding, whilst a plainer and wiser description of persons found in this contempt of affectation such a security from design—either upon their hearts or their understandings—that they willingly yielded him both; and they made this sacrifice with a kind of joyful astonishment to observe that where the Graces never appeared, the Virtues acted for them." This natural blemish in the man—this habitual ruggedness of manner—appeared to Northcote only the effect of an honest indignation towards that which he conceived to be error. It however made its appearance early in life, and seems to have been inherited from his father, who, according to all accounts, was coarse and unaccommodating. "One Sunday afternoon, while his mother was at church, Mr. Opie, then a boy of ten or eleven years old, fixed his materials for painting in a little kitchen, directly opposite the parlour where his father sat reading the Bible. He went on drawing till he had finished everything but the head, and when he came to that, he frequently ran into the parlour to look up in his father's face. He repeated this extraordinary interruption so often that the old man became quite angry, and threatened to correct him severely if he did the like again. This was exactly what the young artist wanted. He wished to paint his father's eyes when lighted up and sparkling with indignation; and having obtained his end, he quietly resumed his task. He had completed his picture before his mother's

return from church, and on her entering the house, he set it before her. She knew it instantly; but, ever true to her principles, she was very angry with him for having painted on a Sunday, thereby profaning the Sabbath-day. The child, however, was so elated by his success, that he disregarded her remonstrance, and hanging fondly round her neck, he was alive only to the pleasure she had given him by owning the strength of the resemblance. At this moment his father entered the room, and recognizing his own portrait, immediately highly approved of his son's amusement during the afternoon, and exhibited the picture with ever-new satisfaction to all who came to the house; while the story of his anger at interruptions, so happily excused and accounted for, added interest to his narrative, and gratified still more the pride of the artist."

I would fain disbelieve this story, but it comes too well authenticated to be omitted in a narrative whose object is truth. To think of a child deliberately putting his father in a passion that it might copy the sparkling indignation of his eyes! and a wife, and a loving one, rewarding the trick of this sucking incendiary as a thing pleasant and meritorious! The rod must, after all, have been a necessary piece of furniture in the household of the carpenter of St. Agnes!

Opie, having conquered the chief difficulties of his profession, and acquired a knowledge of French and a smattering of Latin, now found leisure to become sensible of a want which London could easily supply. It is reported that love of money first directed his eyes to the daughter of a pawnbroker who lived in his neighbourhood. Neither his courtship nor his marriage have been alluded to by his biographers; the first was short, and the second unhappy. His wife, a little woman with very dark eyes, and a handsome portion, had a mind of her own as well as the artist; and, loving gaiety, was not disposed to shut herself up from sun and air with a man of a morose turn, whose whole time was dedicated to the study of the dark masters. It is said that a kind word and an affectionate shake by the hand, banished from his mind in general the remembrance of any wrong committed against him; and that

such was his placability of nature, that he was willing to confide again in those who unworthily betrayed him. His wife, a childless and giddy woman, soon put his charity to the extreme proof, and he was compelled to sue for a divorce.

That domestic sorrow such as this had a serious influence upon his temper and his studies, who can doubt? but those who have drawn his character and delineated his life avoid any allusion to his frail partner; they had knowledge and declined to use it—they were over-sensitive, and have not done justice to the memory of Opie by this omission. The only allusion to the circumstance is contained in one of the painter's own smart sayings. He was passing the church of St. Giles late one evening, in the company of a friend of avowed sceptical opinions. "I was *married* at that church," observed Opie. "And I was *christened* there," said his companion. "Indeed!" answered the painter, "it seems they make unsure work at that church, for it neither holds in wedlock nor in baptism!" [1]

Having freed himself from the encumbrance of an unfaithful wife, and got rid of the crowds of carriages which filled up the street and annoyed his neighbours, he divided his time between his profession and the cultivation of his mind. He was conscious of his defective education; and, like Reynolds, desired to repair it, by mingling in the company of men of learning and talent, and by the careful perusal of the noblest writers. "Such," says his best biographer, "were the powers of his memory, that he remembered all he had read: and Milton, Shakespeare, Dryden, Pope, Gray, Cowper, Butler, Burke, and Dr. Johnson, he might, to use a familar expression, be said to know by heart." A man of powerful understanding and ready apprehension, who "remembered all he read," and who had nine of the greatest and most voluminous of our authors by heart, could never be at any loss in company, if he had tolerable skill in using his stores.

[1] According to the act of divorce granted by the Consistory Court to Opie, he was married at St. Martin's-in-the-Fields, not at St. Giles's. His first wife's name was Mary Bunn, and he lived with her until 1795, when she eloped with a Mr. John Edwards.—Ed.

To his intellectual vigour we have strong testimony. "Mr. Opie crowds more wisdom," said Horne Tooke, "into a few words than almost any man I ever knew—he speaks as it were in axioms—and what he observes is worthy to be remembered." "Had Mr. Opie turned his powers of mind," says Sir James Mackintosh, "to the study of philosophy, he would have been one of the first philosophers of the age. I was never more struck than with his original manner of thinking and expressing himself in conversation; and had he written on the subject, he would, perhaps, have thrown more light on the philosophy of his art than any man living." "He aimed at no competition with the learned," says Amelia Opie, "while with a manly simplicity which neither feared contempt nor courted applause, he has often, even in such company, made observations originating in the native treasures of his own mind, which learning could not teach, and which learning alone could not enable its possessor to appreciate."

At the period of his first appearance there was considerable encouragement for works of an historic nature; West, Barry, Fuseli, and, occasionally, Reynolds, produced such, with more or less of success and applause. That this high feeling has now greatly subsided in England, there can be little doubt: even during the lifetime of Opie, commissions, as they are called, for such pictures were becoming more and more rare; and now, alas!—it is sufficient to mention two of the more striking instances—the "Satan" of Lawrence, and the "Fall of Nineveh" of Martin, remain in their studios. Opie, anxious for fame, and yet resolved to live, did well then in dividing his pencil between portraiture and history.

His chief excellence lies in the former; there he has great breadth, vigour, and natural force of character—touched, it must be allowed, in some instances with a certain air of village audacity, which comes from the artist rather than from the sitter. His old men's heads—half fancy and half portrait—are deficient in carefulness of finish; but this is more than compensated by that rough and happy energy with which they are dashed out. They furnish no comparisons—such as critics love to make—

with the works of Velasquez, or Vandyke, or Reynolds; they have a better claim to distinction—they are truly original productions.[1] His portrait of Charles Fox has been justly commended, nor does the circumstance of his having completed the likeness from the bust by Nollekens, as related by Smith, diminish his merit. When Fox, who sat opposite to Opie at the Academy dinner given in the exhibition room, heard the general applause which his portrait obtained, he remembered that he had given him less of his time than the painter had requested, and said across the table, "There, Mr. Opie, you see I was right; everybody thinks it could not be better. Now if I had minded you and consented to sit again, you most probably would have spoiled the picture." While this far-famed portrait was in progress, Opie became alarmed for his success: he was distracted by a multitude of hints, which friends who came in swarms dropped, regarding the expression, the posture, and the handling. Fox was amused with the variety of opinions, and kindly whispered to Opie, "Don't mind what these people say—you must know better than they do."[2]

The ladies who sat for their portraits he found more difficult to deal with than the great leader of the Whigs. There was at first a want of grace and softness in his female heads—he felt this early, and laboured to amend it—but,

[1] There is an excellent portrait by him in the National Collection of William Siddons, husband of the great actress, which entirely coincides with this description. It is a powerful and characteristic work.—Ed.

[2] Southey also sat to Opie for his portrait. He gives the following account of the procedure in a letter to Mr. William Taylor, of Norwich, for whom the picture was painted:—

"*London, April* 23, 1806.

"Had I begun to write to you sooner I could not have told you that your picture was begun this morning; that I had sat two hours in a very fine velvet chair, and that there my portrait is looking, Mrs. Opie says, 'quite alive.'"

"*May* 27, 1806.

"I sat five times in the velvet chair, and each time little less than three hours, though the law is satisfied with one hour in the pillory, and at the gallows. Opie will perhaps complain . . . . You, I hope, will like the picture, as every person who has seen it is much pleased."

It was afterwards engraved for Southey's life.—Ed.

it is said, that he did not wholly succeed till his second marriage. "Opie," said one of his brethren, when he exhibited some female portraits soon after that event, "we never saw anything like this in you before—this must be owing to your wife;" and it is likely that the compliment, though paid perhaps in jest, was nevertheless just. The habitual ruggedness of his personal manners yielded to the winning and graceful tact of Amelia Opie, and it is easy to believe that her presence might have the same influence upon his pencil. The words in which she vindicates her husband from the charge of speaking his mind coarsely, and a desire to appear a grand natural character, are well worth transcribing.

"Of all employments portrait-painting is perhaps the most painful and trying to a man of pride and sensibility, and the most irritating to an irritable man. To hear beauties and merits in a portrait often stigmatized as deformities and blemishes—to have high lights taken for white spots, and dark effective shadows for the dirty appearance of a snuff-taker:—to witness discontent in the by-standers, because the painting does not exhibit the sweet smile of the sitter, though it is certain that a smile on canvas looks like the grin of idiocy; while a laughing eye, if the artist attempts to copy it, as unavoidably assumes the disgusting resemblance of progressive intoxication. Sitters themselves Mr. Opie rarely found troublesome; but *persons of worship*, as he called them, that is, persons of great consequence, either from talent, rank, or widely spreading connections, are sometimes attended by others, whose aim is to endeavour to please the great man or woman by flattery wholly at the expense of the poor artist; and to minister sweet food to the palate of the patron, regardless though it be wormwood to that of the painter. Hence arises an eulogy on the beauties and perfections of the person painted, and regrets that they are so inadequately rendered by the person painting; while frivolous objection succeeds to frivolous objection, and impossibilities are expected and required as if they were possibilities. I have too frequently witnessed this, and *my* temper and patience have often been on the point of

deserting me, even when Mr. Opie's had not apparently undergone the slightest alteration—a strong proof that he possessed some of that self-command which is one of the requisites of good breeding." [1]

He experienced no such difficulties in his historical compositions—the heroes or the beauties of other days had no friends to be fastidious about their merry eyes or their smiling lips, and he could exchange dark ringlets for tresses of gold, and distribute glowing complexions according to his own will and pleasure. He had, however, an equally painful battle to sustain with the men of taste and virtù, whose heads were crammed with the remembrance of the principal works of the great masters of Italy—men who had ridden post-haste through the Continent, and returned with the incurable belief that everything old was excellent—everything new poor and degenerate. Originality was looked upon as something strange and outré—to trust to the strength of nature was weakness—to work so that the spirit and effect could be justified by reference to Rembrandt or Raphael, was to possess true taste, and to be imbued with the spirit of the great masters. Opie, it must be admitted, wanted poetic power to enable him to rise to the first eminence as an historical painter—but he had a sense of propriety of action and vigour of character which these connoisseurs wanted nerve to feel, and which have stamped no light value on many of his historical productions.

Those which have caught public fancy most are the "Murder of James the First of Scotland;" [2] the "Pre-

[1] That he had not that suavity of manner that brought Sir Joshua Reynolds and Sir Thomas Lawrence so many sitters, is proved by the following anecdote, related by Wolcot. A lady once, who was sitting to him, expressed a wish that her portrait should be made very beautiful. "Then, madam, I suppose you do not want it to be like?" replied the blunt artist. He also gave offence by summoning several of his sitters who had been somewhat remiss in payment.—Ed.

[2] This was exhibited in 1786, in which year he sent two other subjects and five portraits to the Royal Academy. He appears to have first exhibited there in 1782, and in 1787, after sending his "Assassination of Rizzio," one of his most admired pictures, he was elected Associate, and in the following spring, full Academician. Leslie, Redgrave tells us,

sentation in the Temple;" "Jephthah's Vow;" the "Death of David Rizzio;" "Young Arthur taken Prisoner;" "Arthur with Hubert;" "Belisarius;" "Juliet in the Garden," and the "Escape of Gil Blas and Musidora." Many others might be named, and many more praised; for he conceived without much delay, and executed with great readiness. He had no air-drawn visions of beauty before him which his pencil loved to follow; he sketched in his group, sought living nature to help him out with what was not in his mind's eye, and, bending his subject to his model rather than elevating the model to suit the subject, enslaved himself to the literal flesh and blood which he copied. "He painted what he saw," says West, "in the most masterly manner, and he varied little from it. He saw nature in one point more distinctly and forcibly than any painter that ever lived. The truth of colour, as conveyed to the eye through the atmosphere, by which the distance of every object is ascertained, was never better expressed than by him. He distinctly represented local colour in all its various tones and proportions, whether in light or in shadow, with a perfect uniformity of imitation. Other painters frequently make two separate colours of objects in light and in shade,—Opie never. With him no colour—whether white, black, primary, or compound—ever, in any situation, lost its respective hue."

His works were not the offspring of random fits of labour, after long indulgence in idleness; they were the well-considered progeny of his mind and hand—the fruit of daily toil, in which every hour had its allotted task. He sketched out a plan of weekly study, from which pleasure or persuasion seldom wiled him. "He was always in his painting-room," says Amelia Opie, "by half-past eight in winter, and by eight o'clock in sum-

thought very highly of the "Assassination of Rizzio," and at his suggestion it was borrowed for the use of the students in the Royal Academy; but Redgrave himself does not endorse Leslie's opinion of its merits, but speaks of its "coarse and slovenly execution," though he admits that it is a vigorous and bold work, and as compared with the tame productions of most of Opie's contemporaries, has a striking effect and marked individuality.

mer; and there he generally remained, closely engaged in painting, till half-past four in winter, and till five in summer. Nor did he ever allow himself to be idle when he had no pictures bespoken; and as he never let his execution rust for want of practice, he, in that case, either sketched out designs for historical or fancy pictures, or endeavoured, by working on an unfinished picture of mine, to improve himself by incessant practice in that difficult branch of art, female portraiture. Neither did he suffer his exertions to be paralysed by neglect the most unexpected, and disappointment the most undeserved."

The world looks only at the brilliant result of an artist's labour. We see a magnificent work, filled with divine shapes and glowing with the freshest hues of heaven and earth, and the idea never darkens in our fancy that he who created this prodigy is in dread of want, and perhaps even now knows not how he is to be fed to-morrow. "Though he had a picture in the Exhibition of 1801, which was universally admired, and purchased as soon as beheld"—I quote once more the words of his widow—"he saw himself at the end of that year and the beginning of the next almost wholly without employment; and even my sanguine temper yielding to the trial, I began to fear that, small as our expenditure was, it must become still smaller. Not that I allowed myself to own that I despondent; on the contrary, I was forced to talk to him of hopes and to bid him look forward to brighter prospects, as his temper, naturally desponding, required all the support imaginable. But gloomy and painful indeed were those three alarming months, and I consider them as the severest trial I experienced during my married life. Even despondence did not make him indolent; he continued to paint regularly as usual, and, no doubt, by that means increased his ability to do justice to the torrent of business which soon afterwards set in towards him, and never ceased to flow till the day of his death."[1]

[1] Among other commissions, Opie, like most of the popular artists of his time, was employed by Boydell on his celebrated Shakespeare illustrations. He painted five subjects for the Boydell Gallery, from the

There is no doubt that Opie incurred a debt of gratitude to Wolcot for his frank and friendly encouragement, when he was a menial in his house in Cornwall, and for his anxious introduction of the "Cornish Wonder" to the novelty-gazers of London. The poet often complained that the painter was ungrateful. He probably expected that when Opie had earned fame and name, he should still consider himself under the shadow of his patronage. I know not enough of the private history of the artist to decide, with certainty and exactness, in how far he was blamable for the coldness which took place between them, and anticipated the grave. The doctor was an odd and capricious man, who loved swearing better than satire, and united them both frequently to the injury of his best friends: it was no wonder therefore that Opie should shrink from his society, more especially if he still retained the airs of the master. Officious go-betweens carried to the artist the last satiric thing which the poet had uttered concerning him, and then returned to the satirist with the morose and surly observations of Opie. "What ails Wolcot at you?" said one of those persons—"once I thought he had been a friendly and kind-hearted man?" "Aye, aye," answered Opie—"in time you will know him." When the painter's works happened to be praised in Wolcot's presence, he always coupled very dexterously the present time with the past, and formed a background to his fame with the humility and darkness of his early life. With him who gave the first cause of offence the odium of this estrangement must abide, and I have, I own, some fears that it appertains to Opie.

For the loss of this early friend, the infidelity of his wife, and the fickleness of popular opinion, he sought a

"Winter's Tale," "Romeo and Juliet," "Timon of Athens," and two from "Henry VI."

Another Shakespeare subject by him from "Troilus and Cressida" hangs on the staircase in the National Gallery. It represents Pandarus in the act of unveiling Cressida—"Come, draw this curtain, and let's see your picture"—and is a gracefully conceived and well-executed work. It does not, however, give so good an idea of Opie's bold style of art as the portrait of William Siddons before mentioned.—Ed.

wise remedy—a woman worthy of his affection, who could soothe him in periods of depression, and, by her good sense and clear understanding, aid him in all his undertakings. He was thirty-seven years old, and that youthful fever which all feel was past and gone; he could now choose discreetly.[1] The merits of the lady are widely known—not through the genius of her husband, but her own; and all who have read her works must feel that she was worthy of bearing the name of Opie. To her we owe the little that has been publicly told concerning the private life and modes of study of her husband; and though we wish to know him more familiarly, we are not insensible to the delicacy of the task which she undertook. What other colours, save those that are rich and bright, could a wife use in drawing her husband's character? She expected, indeed, that an ampler memoir would be written by a bolder, and perhaps colder hand; and might desire to leave to this biographer the ungentle task of adding the ruder touches and the darker shades. This has not been done; from the garland which she hung over his hearse, I must take a few more flowers. I shall endeavour to do this with a respectful hand.

Opie was no impatient labourer for wealth, who desired to snatch his gains before his colours were dry on the canvas: he studied much, wrought incessantly, and was ill to please. "During the nine years that I was his wife (says Mrs. Opie), I never saw him satisfied with any one of his productions: and often, very often, have I seen him enter my sitting-room, and, throwing himself in an agony of despondence on the sofa, exclaim, 'I am the most stupid of created beings, and I never, never shall be a painter as long as I live.' He used to study at Somerset House, when the pictures were hung up, with more perse-

[1] So far from calm and discreet choice, Opie, according to his wife's account, fell in love with her at first sight. It was at an evening party, at Norwich, that he first met the beautiful Miss Alderson. She arrived late, and Opie, who was in conversation with the host when she entered, broke off suddenly, exclaiming, "Who is that? Who is she? Will you introduce me?" "And almost from that moment," says Mrs Opie, "he became my avowed lover." They were married in 1798.—Ed.

vering attention and thirst for improvement than was ever exhibited perhaps by the lowest student in the schools, and on his return I never heard him expatiate on his own excellences, but sorrowfully dwell on his own defects; while he often expressed to me his envy of certain powers in art which other painters were masters of, and which he feared he should never be able to obtain."

Thus quick to censure his own works, our painter was slow to commend those of his brethren. There is indeed a singular tardiness amongst artists in either praising or blaming one another: they seem to think that the whole world is waiting for their opinion, and that commendation will raise a brother above his level, and censure sink him below it. They deal out dark and diplomatic responses respecting each other's merits, and leave you to interpret their meaning. "Opie," says his wife, "was free from vanity—more particularly from that vanity which induces a man to believe that his wisdom is great. He was so slow to commend, and panegyric on the works of contemporary artists was so sparingly given by him, that it was natural for some persons to suppose him actuated by the feelings of professional jealousy; but it was more generous, and I am fully convinced more *just*, to think this sluggishness to praise was merely the result of such a *high idea* of excellence in his art as made him not easily satisfied with efforts to obtain it; and surely he who was never led by vanity or conceit to be contented with his *own* works, could not be expected to show great indulgence to the works of others." I know not what standard of excellence was present to the fancy of Opie; but if a man is to withhold his approbation from all works which fail to equal the best of the golden days of art, he may shut his mouth for ever.

He was exposed, as all men of eminence are, to the attacks of the envious and the malevolent. A speculator in biography having handled one man of genius with sharp and vulgar severity, singled out Opie for his second victim, and so little did he keep his infamous purpose a secret, that it reached the ear of the artist. Opie, having perused some of his adversary's compositions, saw that

the man mistook the venom of the arrow for the vigour of the bow: he only smiled, and said, "If this is all he can do, he is welcome to say anything of me he likes. I shall neither menace him nor bribe him into silence." "For his fame, *latterly* at least," says Mrs. Opie, "he was indebted to himself alone: by no puffs, no paragraphs, did he endeavour to obtain public notice: and I have heard him, with virtuous pride, declare that whether his reputation were great or small, it was self-derived, and he was indebted for it to no exertions save those of his own industry and talents. He might, like others, mistake sometimes weeds for flowers, and bring them home, and carefully preserve them as such; but the weeds were gathered by his own hands, and he had, at least, by his labour deserved that they should be valuable acquisitions."

His heart was with his art—other artists, as Northcote said, painted to live, but Opie lived to paint; and though he was dilatory about praising the works which his brethren produced with the brush, he was forward enough in admiring their attempts with the pen. "Whatever," said Mrs. Opie, "had a tendency to exalt painting and its professors in the eyes of the world, was a source of gratification to him. He used often to expatiate on the great classical attainments of Mr. Fuseli, whose wit he admired, and whose conversation he delighted in: but I have often thought that one cause of the pleasure which he derived from mentioning that gentleman's attainments, was his conviction, that the learning of Mr. Fuseli was an honour to his profession, and tended to exalt it in the opinion of society." Nor was his pleasure less in reading the "Poem on Art," by Mr. Shee—a work which will be valued while knowledge, feeling, and elegance are in estimation.

An imaginary sum was floating incessantly before Opie's eyes, which his pencil was to accumulate. That golden speculation at length achieved, he intended to retire from art—establish a gallery of good paintings, and a well-stocked library; and with his wife by his side, and all cares for a well-filled easel given to the winds, enjoy life like one who knew it was short. As he was

frugal and temperate, his expenses were small; and as he was a quick workman, his gains were large. He was too proud to incur debts, and not so vain as to give expensive entertainments to those who would probably have paid them with sarcasms. He was one likely, therefore, to achieve his wishes in gaining that desired sum, which was to come with healing on its wings to the spirit of the painter. But he did not, perhaps, reflect, that in retiring from his profession an artist retires also from his station in society. An artist is like an instrument of music, which gives joy and gladness when skilfully touched; but is only looked upon as an idle encumbrance and a piece of wood when silent and out of tune.

Opie having written a Memoir of Reynolds for Wolcot's edition of Pilkington's "Dictionary of Painters," and delivered lectures on art at the British Institution, aspired to the Professorship of Painting in the Royal Academy, when Barry was ejected. In the Memoir of Sir Joshua, he had exhibited knowledge of his subject, a just perception of character, and no small infirmity of taste; in his lectures at the Institution he had been considered confused, abrupt, and unmethodical; but now, with confirmed taste and an increase of knowledge, he offered himself a candidate for the professorship.—He was unexpectedly opposed by Fuseli. When that eminent scholar was named, he relinquished his pretensions—but it is no small proof of the vanity of Opie, that he declared as he withdrew from the contest, he would have yielded to no one save Henry Fuseli. When the Professor was made Keeper he renewed his claim and was instantly elected.

Of his Four Lectures, on Design, Invention, Chiaro-Scuro, and Colouring, some account must be given, and a short one will suffice. Few who read them will concur in the praise bestowed on his discourses, at the Institution, by the late excellent Bishop of Durham, "You were known before as a great painter, Mr. Opie, you will now be known as a great writer also." They are clear and sensible enough, but deficient in original grasp of mind—there are few vigorous sallies, or poetical flights, or passages of deep discernment and delicate discrimination.

He wants imagination to raise him to the height of his "great argument," and his powers of illustration are neither vivid nor various. Yet it cannot be denied that many valuable reflections are scattered over these four lectures. Let all those youths who desire to become artists read the following admirable passage thrice over before they wet the brush.

"Impressed as I am at the present moment with a full conviction of the difficulties attendant on the practice of painting, I cannot but feel it also my duty to caution every one who hears me, against entering into it from improper motives, and with inadequate views of the subject: as they will thereby only run a risk of entailing misery and disgrace on themselves and their connections during the rest of their lives. Should any student therefore happen to be present who has taken up the art on the supposition of finding it an easy and amusing employment—any one who has been sent into the Academy by his friend, in the idea that he may cheaply acquire an honourable and profitable profession—any one who has mistaken a petty kind of imitative monkey talent for genius—any one who hopes by it to get rid of what he thinks a more vulgar or disagreeable situation, to escape confinement at the counter, or the desk—any one urged merely by vanity or interest—or, in short, impelled by any consideration but a real and unconquerable passion for excellence;—let him drop it at once, and avoid these walls and everything connected with them, as he would the pestilence: for if he have not this unquenchable liking, in addition to all the requisites above enumerated, he may pine in indigence, or skulk through life as a hackney likeness-taker, a copier, a drawing-master, or pattern-drawer to young ladies, or he may turn picture cleaner and help time to destroy excellences which he cannot rival—but he must never hope to be, in the proper sense of the word, a painter. Strait is the gait and narrow is the way that leads to excellence, and few there be that find it."

His notion of the ideal or the beautiful is natural and just. "I will not undertake," he says, "the perilous task

of defining the word beauty; but I have no hesitation in asserting that when beauty is said to be the proper end of art, it must not be understood as confining the choice to one set of objects, or as breaking down the boundaries and destroying the natural classes, orders, and divisions of things, but as meaning the perfection of each subject in its kind, in regard to form, colour, and all its other associated and consistent attributes. In this qualified and, I will venture to say, proper acceptation of the word in regard to art, it may be applied to nearly all things most excellent in their different ways. Thus we have various modes of beauty in the statues of the Venus, the Juno, the Niobe, the Antinous, and the Apollo; and thus we may speak, without exciting a confusion of ideas, of a beautiful peasant as well as of a beautiful princess, of a beautiful child, or of a beautiful old man; of a beautiful cottage, a beautiful church, a beautiful palace, or even of a beautiful ruin. The discovery or conception of this great and perfect idea of things, of nature in its purest and most essential form, unimpaired by disease, unmutilated by accident, and unsophisticated by local habits and temporary fashions, and the exemplification of it in practice by getting above individual imitation, rising from the species to the genus, and uniting in every subject all the perfection of which it is capable in its kind, is the highest and ultimate exertion of human genius."

In his "Lecture upon Invention" also there is much to commend. "Unfortunately," he says, "this most inestimable quality, in which genius is thought more particularly to consist, is of all human faculties the least subject to reason or rule, being derived from heaven alone according to some; attributed by others to organization; by a third class, to industry; by a fourth, to circumstances; by a fifth, to the influence of the stars; and in the general opinion, the gift of nature only. But though few teach us how to improve it, and still fewer how to obtain it, all agree that nothing can be done without it. Destitute of invention, a poet is but a plagiary, and a painter but a copier of others. But however true it may be, that invention cannot be reduced to rule and taught by regular

process, it must necessarily, like every other effect, have an adequate cause. It cannot be by chance that excellence is produced with certainty and constancy; and however remote and obscure its origin, thus much is certain—that observation must precede invention, and a mass of materials must be collected before we can combine them. He, therefore, who wishes to be a painter must overlook no kind of knowledge. He must range deserts and mountains for images, picture upon his mind every tree of the forest and flower of the valley, observe the crags of the rock and the pinnacles of the palace, follow the windings of the rivulet, and watch the changes of the clouds; in short, all nature, savage or civilized, animate or inanimate, the plants of the garden, the animals of the wood, the minerals of the earth, and the motions of the sky, must undergo his examination. Whatever is great, whatever is beautiful, whatever is interesting, and whatever is dreadful, must be familiar to his imagination, and concur to store his mind with an inexhaustible variety of ideas ready for association on every possible occasion, to embellish sentiment and give effect to truth. It is, moreover, absolutely necessary that then the epitome of all—his principal subject and his judge—should become a particular object of his investigation: he must be acquainted with all that is characteristic and beautiful, both in regard to his mental and bodily endowments—must study their analogies, and learn how far moral and physical excellence are connected and dependent one on the other. He must further observe the power of the passions in all their combinations, and trace their changes as modified by constitution, or by the accidental influences of climate or custom—from the sprightliness of infancy to the despondency of decrepitude: he must be familiar with all the modes of life, and, above all, endeavour to discriminate the essential from the accidental, to divest himself of the prejudices of his own age and country, and disregarding temporary fashions and local taste, learn to see nature and beauty in the abstract, and rise to general and transcendental truth, which will always be the same."

Next to the contemplation of nature he urges the study

of poetry, which abounds in the noblest pictures and the most splendid descriptions—unites the present with the past, and anticipates the future. He feels, however, that many of the sublimest and most touching passages in poetry cannot be embodied in painting; and he also feels that the multitude, with many men of taste among them, are slow in acknowledging the merits which belong to the imagination, and turn coldly away from its most magnificent efforts. There is, indeed, a certain coarseness of feeling as to works of elegance and fancy which pervades this country; and it extends to the labours of the pen as well as to those of the pencil and the chisel. In other nations the presence of such things inspires a kind of awe; with us a statue is occasionally a mark to cast stones at, and the mob at best bestow their shilling to stare at what they cannot enjoy. "So habituated," says Opie, "are the people of this country to the sight of portraiture only that they can scarcely as yet consider painting in any other light: they will hardly admire a landscape that is not a view of a particular place, nor a history unless composed of likenesses of the persons represented, and are apt to be staggered, confounded, and wholly unprepared to follow such vigorous flights of imagination as would—*as will* be felt and applauded with enthusiasm in a more advanced and liberal stage of criticism. In our exhibitions, which often display extraordinary powers wasted on worthless subjects, one's ear is pained, one's very soul is rent with hearing crowd after crowd sweeping round, and instead of discussing the merits of the different works on view, as to conception, composition, and execution, all reiterating the same dull and tasteless questions, *who is that?* and *is it like?*" Passages such as these would reflect credit on any professor the Academy ever possessed.

On the delivery of his first lecture in the Academy Opie was complimented by his brethren; he was escorted home by Sir William Beechey, and appeared to his wife in a flush of joy. Next morning he said he had passed a restless night, for he was so *elated* that he could not sleep.

When Opie had finished his course of Lectures, Mr. Prince Hoare requested an article for his periodical paper

called "The Artist." "I am tired"—such was his answer —"I am tired of writing. I shall be a gentleman during the spring months, keep a horse, and ride out every morning." This vision of happiness, such as it was, he lived not to realize. He was attacked by a slow and a consuming illness, which baffled the knowledge of five skilful doctors —Pitcairn and Baillie were of the number. They were unable to cure or even to comprehend it. When it was known that he was seriously ill, his friends—and they were numerous and respectable—came round him with affectionate solicitude. Amongst those that he loved most was Henry Thomson, now a member of the Academy, and to him he confided the finishing of the robes of the Duke of Gloucester's portrait. On Saturday, when the pictures were to be delivered for the exhibition at Somerset House, the picture of the Royal Duke was placed at the foot of his bed. A fit of delirium had subsided; he lifted his head, and said, "There is not colour enough on the background." More colour was added; Opie looked at it with great satisfaction, and said with a smile, "Thomson, it will do now, it will do now: if you could not do it, nobody could." The delirium returned, and took its hue from the picture he had just looked at. He imagined himself employed in his favourite pursuit, and continued painting in idea till death interposed on Thursday, the 9th of April, 1807. On dissection, the lower part of the spinal marrow and its investing membrane were found slightly inflamed, and the brain surcharged with blood. On Monday, April 20th, he was interred in St. Paul's Cathedral, near Sir Joshua Reynolds.

In person Opie looked like an inspired peasant: even in his most courtly days there was a country air about him, and he was abrupt in his language and careless in his dress, without being conscious of either. His looks savoured of melancholy—some have said of moroseness; the portrait which he has left of himself shows a noble forehead and an intellectual eye. There are few who cannot feel his talents, and all must admire his fortitude. He came coarse and uneducated from the country into the polished circles of London; was caressed, invited, praised,

and patronized for one little year or so, and then the giddy tide of fashion receded; but he was not left a wreck. He had that strength of mind which triumphs over despair. He estimated the patronage of fickle ignorance at what it was worth, and lived to invest his name with a brighter as well as steadier halo than that of fashionable wonder.

His literary productions have, I think, been overrated; yet they are respectable—I will even allow them to be wonderful for one in his condition, who had a laborious profession to follow. The great defect is what one would least have expected—the want of vigour and energy.

What he thus failed to work into his writings he poured largely into his paintings. There is a freshness of look and a rude homely strength in his pictures which belong to the wide academy of nature, and came upon him in Cornwall. He is not a leader perhaps—but neither is he the servile follower of any man or any school. His original deficiency of imagination no labour could strengthen and no study raise. His model mastered him; and he seemed to want the power of elevating what was mean, and of substituting the elegant for the vulgar. Opie saw the common but not the poetic nature of his subjects: he had no visions of the grand and the heroic. His pencil could strike out a rough and manly Cromwell, but was unfit to cope with the dark subtle spirit of a Vane, or the princely eye and bearing of a Falkland or a Montrose. His strength lay in boldness of effect, simplicity of composition—in artless attitudes, and in the vivid portraiture of individual nature.

END OF VOL I.

CHISWICK PRESS:—C. WHITTINGHAM, TOOKS COURT, CHANCERY LANE.

00023492

Digitized with financial assistance from the
Government of Maharashtra
on 18 July, 2018